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THE

NATURAL HISTORY

OF THE

CHINESE BOY

AND OF THE

CHINESE GIRL:

A STUDY IN SOCIOLOGY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS."

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PREFACE.

If the proper study of mankind is man, the subject of the following pages must be of interest to every one who enquires into the forces which have moulded Chinese society in the past, and which regulate it at present. The observations upon which the conclusions are based have been largely, although not exclusively, taken in the northern part of the empire. The Chinese people, however, are in such an important sense a unit, that differences in custom resemble those local variations of the compass, which, once understood and allowed for, serve but to confirm what they at first appear to contradict.

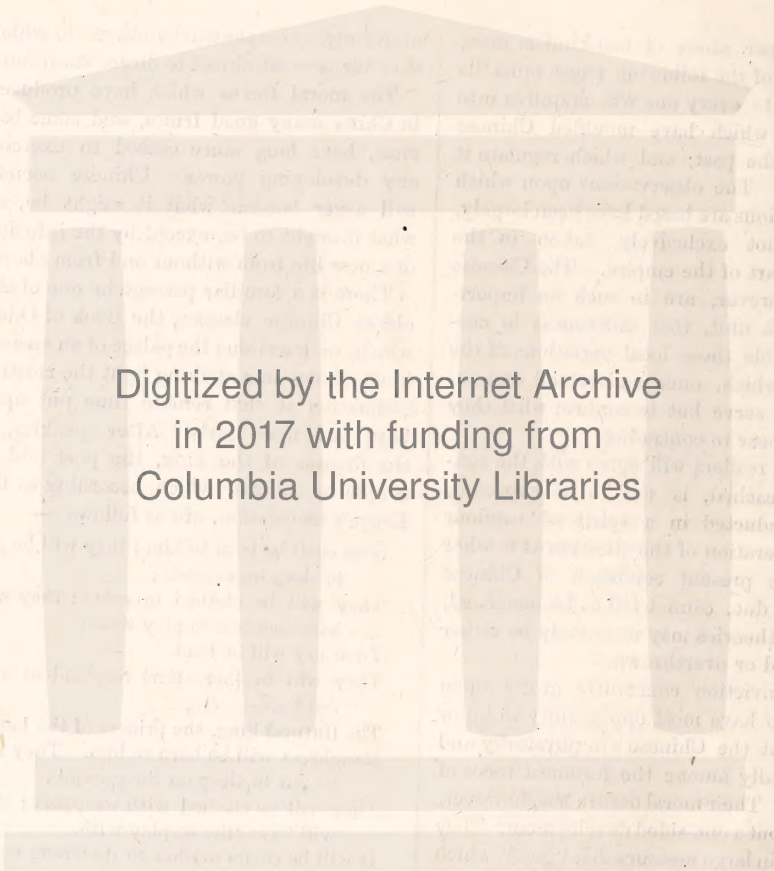
That all readers will agree with the conclusions reached, is not to be expected, but if conducted in a spirit of candour the consideration of the question as to what causes the present condition of Chinese society is due, cannot fail to be beneficial, whatever theories may ultimately be either established or overthrown.

The conviction constantly grows upon those who have most opportunity to know them, that the Chinese are physically and intellectually among the foremost races of the earth. Their moral nature has, however, received but a one-sided development. They have had in large measure that "good" which has been pronounced to be the worst enemy of the "best." Many of the results which have been attained are of a high order of excellence, but these good results are uniformly accompanied by others to which it is our present object to direct attention.

The moral forces which have produced in China many good fruits, and some bad ones, have long since ceased to exercise any developing power. Chinese society will never become what it might be, or what it ought to be, except by the infusion of a new life from without and from above.

There is a familiar passage in one of the oldest Chinese classics, the Book of Odes, which, in describing the palace of an ancient king, shows in a striking light the relative estimation at that remote time put upon boys and upon girls. After speaking of the dreams of the king, the poet adds a couple of stanzas, which, according to Dr. Legge's translation, are as follows :—

Sons shall be born to him ; they will be put
to sleep on couches ;
They will be clothed in robes ; they will
have sceptres to play with ;
Their cry will be loud.
They will be (hereafter) resplendent with
red knee-covers,
The (future) king, the princes of the land.
Daughters will be born to him. They will
be put to sleep on the ground ;
They will be clothed with wrappers ; they
will have tiles to play with.
It will be theirs neither to do wrong nor to
do good.
Only about the spirits and the food will
they have to think,
And to cause no sorrow to their parents.



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THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE CHINESE BOY.

I.

THE early years of a Chinese boy are spent in what, viewed from the experience of a decade later, must appear to him a condition of supreme happiness. He is welcomed to the household with a wild delight, to which it is wholly impossible for an Occidental to do any justice. He begins life on the theory that whatever he wants, that he must have; this theory is also the one acted upon by those who have him in charge, to an extent which seems to us, who occupy the position of impartial critics, truly amazing. A Chinese mother is the literal slave of her children. If they cry, they must be coddled, most probably carried about, and at whatever expense, if it is possible to prevent such a terrible state of things. They must not be allowed to cry continuously. In this respect, at least, it does not appear that there is much distinction between the treatment of boys and girls. The age at which a boy is too large to be carried is a very indefinite one, and it is common to see distracted mothers staggering with their little goat-feet under the weight of children half their own size, lugging their offspring about for the reason that 'they would not stand it' to be put down. A preparatory discipline of this nature is not adapted to teach children independence, self-control, or any useful lessons, and the result is such as might have been expected. But the Chinese child is an eminently practical being, and he finds by experience that, when there are half a dozen children smaller than himself, the period of his own supreme rule has passed away, and has passed away never to return. To this altered condition he soon learns to adapt himself. Of that sympathy for childhood as such, which is so distinguishing a part of our modern civilisation, an average Chinese father has no conception whatever. By this is not meant that he is not fond of his children, for the reverse is most palpably true. But he has no capacity for entering into the life of a child, and comprehending it. His fondness for his children is the result of the paternal instinct, and is not an intelligent and sympathetic appreciation of the mind of a child. He not only has no conception of such a thing, but he would not be able to understand what is meant by it, if the possibility of such sympathy were pointed out. The invariable reply to all suggestions, looking toward such sympathy coming from a foreigner, seems to be, "Why, he is only a mere child!" It is by the slow moulding forces of maturing life alone that the boy is expected to learn the lessons of life, and these lessons he must learn largely—though not altogether—by himself. To most Chinese children, there is very little that is attractive in their own homes. The instinct of self-preservation does of course lead them to fly to their home, as soon as they meet with any repulse from without, but this instinct they share with animals. Chinese courtyards are almost invariably very contracted, and allow little scope for enterprising youth to indulge in any but the most crude and simple forms of amusement. The Chinese lad generally has but few toys, and those of the simplest and most clumsy description. At certain festivals, especially in the cities, one sees the children loaded down with all varieties of playthings

often of a flimsy and highly inexpensive character. In the country the same phenomenon is observed wherever there has been a large fair, at which the provision for the children is always on a scale commensurate with their known wants. But of these articles, made of earth, paper, bits of cloth, clay, reeds, sugar, and other perishable substances, nothing will be left when the next moon shall have completed its orbit. In regions where bamboo is to be had, there are a few more serviceable and less fragile articles constructed expressly for the children, and such articles doubtless have a longer lease of life.

That Chinese parents should take occasion to have a romp with their children, or even to engage with them in any game whatever, is, so far as we have observed, a thing wholly outside of the range of their wildest imagination. Children have very few game which can be played in the house, and the time which is to our little ones the cream of the whole day, that namely in which they can gather 'around the evening lamp,' is to the Chinese a period of dismal obscurity. By the dim light of a small and ill-trimmed wick, dipped into a few spoonsful of crude vegetable oil, the evening's occupations are carried on as best they may be, but to a foreigner a Chinese home is at such times most ideally comfortless, especially if the season be winter. No wonder that those members of the family who can do so, are glad to crawl upon the more or less perfectly warmed *k'ang*, and wrap themselves in their wadded bed-clothes. During the portion of his existence in which the father and the mother of the Chinese child most gladly forsake him, kind Morpheus takes him up, and claims him for his own. The out-door games of Chinese children are almost of a tame and uninteresting type. Tossing bits of earth at a mark, playing shuttlecock with his heels, striking a small stick sharpened at the ends so as to make it jump into a 'city,' a species of 'fox and geese,' a kind of 'cat's-cradle,' a variety of 'jack-stones,' these are among the most popular juvenile amusements in the rural regions with which we happen to be acquainted. Chinese cities have allurements of their own, some of which do not differ essentially from those found in other parts of the world than China. But even in the country, where restrictions are at a minimum, Chinese lads do not appear to take kindly to anything which involves much exercise. One does not ordinarily see them running races, as foreign boys of the same age cannot fail to do, and their jumping and climbing are of the most elementary sort. We have never heard of a crow which was so injudicious as to build its nest in a spot where it would be visible to the eye of an Anglo-Saxon boy, unless the owner of the eye had previously made a long journey with it to a distance from all human habitations. But Chinese crows build their huge nests in all sorts of trees, in and about every Chinese village. It is not uncommon to see an old poplar with ten or twelve of these huge mats of sticks, which are undisturbed from year to year and from generation to generation. Buddhist teachings in regard to the sacredness of animal life do not suffice to account for the singular inviolability which cows'-nests enjoy in China. In a region where every stick of fuel is precious, what sacredness can attach to a bushel or two of large twigs, when the crows have visibly done using them? Neither does superstition in regard to ill-luck arising from demolition of the nests of crows on account of their security, although at first sight this may seem to be the case. Extensive enquiries have satisfied us, that the true explanation is simply the natural one, that the Chinese boy is afraid to climb so high as a crow's-nest. 'What if he should fall?' says every one when applied to for information on the point, and it is this unanswered and unanswerable question which seems to protect young Chinese crows from age to age.

The Chinese boy can seldom get access to running water; that is to say, the proportion of Chinese who can do so, is infinitesimal. Most of them have no lakes, rivers, or ponds in which they can plunge and learn to swim, or in which they can fish. The village mud-hole is the nearest approach to the joys of a 'watering-place' to which Chinese children can ordinarily aspire. These excavations represent the hole or the pit, whence the material for the village houses was originally dug. During the summer time, these pits, many of them as large as a dry-dock, are filled to the brim with dirty water, and at such times they are sure to be surrounded by groups of children clad in the costume of the garden of Eden, enjoying one of the few luxuries of their mundane existence. When the boys are too long to indulge in this amusement, there is much reason to fear that most of them have taken their last bath, no matter to what age their lives may be prolonged! If he cannot fish, neither can the Chinese boy go a-hunting, for in the most populous parts of the plains, of which so large a portion of the empire is composed, there is nothing to hunt. A few small birds, and the common hare, seem to constitute the objects most frequently hunted, but except in the case of the limited number of those who make a business of securing such game to sell as a means of support, there are very few persons who devote their energies to any form of hunting. Indeed, the instinct which is said to lead the average Englishman, to remark, "It is a fine day, let us go and kill something," is totally lacking in the Chinese. In those

relatively limited parts of the empire where ice forms to a sufficient thickness to bear the weight of human beings, one does see considerable frolicking upon frozen rivers and ponds. But the propulsion of the ice-sleds with passengers is a matter of business with those boatmen who during the season of navigation have no other means of earning a living. Chinese children do not take to them as our boys do to sleds, and even if they wish to do so, their parents would never dream of furnishing the children with such an ice-sled simply for amusement. To earn one, as a boy at home earns a sled, or a pair of skates, by doing extra-work, by picking up old iron, and other similar expedients, would be for a Chinese lad at once a physical, a psychological, a moral impossibility. If he lives in a treaty port, where he becomes infected by the example of foreigners, the Chinese boy may not improbably be seen laboriously pushing himself over the ice on one skate, his unoccupied leg being held up, like that of a contemplative goose. But if the amusements of the Chinese lad are relatively scanty and uninteresting, there is one feature of his life which is fixed fact, and upon which nothing is allowed to intrude. This is his work. The number of Chinese children within any given area is literally incalculable, but it may be safely laid down as a general truth, that by far the larger part of these children are for the greater part of their time made to do some useful work. This will not of course be always true of city children, for the reason that to them there is frequently no work open, but it is a generalisation that holds good anywhere in the country. There is scarcely any handicraft in which even the very smallest children cannot be utilised, and it is for this reason in part that hereditary occupations are so commonly the rule. The child bred up to one mode of physical activity is fitted for that, if he is fitted for nothing else. If he is the son of a farmer, there is a very small portion of the year during which there is not some definite work for him to do, by way of assisting in the cultivation of the land. This is no doubt true of farming everywhere, but the unfailing industry of the Chinese and the heavy pressure of the common poverty give to this fact an emphasis not so strongly felt in other lands. But even if the work on the land were to be all done, which never the case until the winter has actually set in, there are two occupations at which the children may be set any time, and at which more myriads of young persons are probably employed, than in any other portion of the planet. These two occupations are gathering fuel and collecting manure. In a land where the expense of transportation forbids the use of coal in places distant even a few miles from the mouth of the pit, it is necessary to depend upon what comes from the soil in any particular place, for fuel to cook the food and furnish such warmth as can be got. Not a stalk, not a twig, not a leaf is wasted. Even at the best, the products of a field ill suffice in the item of fuel for the wants of those who own it. The Chinese habit of constantly drinking hot water, which must be funished a fresh as often as it cools, and for each chance comer, consumes a vast amount of fuel, over and above what would be strictly required for the preparation of food. The collection and storage of the fuel supply is an affair second in importance only to the gathering of the crops. But in every village, a considerable although varying proportion of the population is to be found, who own no land. These people pick up a precarious living as they can, by working for others who have land, but their remuneration is slight, and often wholly insufficient for the food supply of the many mouths clamouring to be filled. For the fuel wherewith to cook the exiguous supplies of this uncertain food, the family is wholly dependent upon what the children can scratch together. Any intermission of this labour is scarcely less a check upon the means of existence, than the interruption of the work of the 'bread-winner' himself. In this dismal struggle for a basket full of leaves and weeds, the children of China expend annually incomputable millenniums of work. In the midst of such a barren wilderness as constitutes the life of most Chinese children, anything which breaks the dull monotony is welcomed with keen joy. The feast-days, the annual or semi-annual fairs held at some neighbouring town, and occasional theatrical exhibition, and the unfailing succession of weddings and funerals, all serve as happy reliefs to the unceasing grind of daily toil. Midway between the most important and the least important of these relaxations is to be reckoned the chance arrival in the village of a foreigner. By that subtle instinct which philosophy does little or nothing to explain, all the children in the country-side seem to have ascertained the fact of this arrival simultaneously, no matter what pains the traveller may have taken to conceal himself in his conveyance. They gather with the keen scent of the buzzard waiting for the expiring camel, and every movement of the strange being is a source of keen joy to the gathered multitudes of children, whose joy are of the fewest and most inconsiderable type. Whenever the traveller in the inn-yard is tempted to empty his wash-dish on the ragged swarming crowd of eagerly curious youth about him, let him pause to reflect, that for them life has at best not too many pleasures, and that one of these is the foreigner, necessarily transitory and always inscrutable, and not to be rudely taken from those who are best qualified to enjoy him. When tempted to hurl objurgations

at the too pervasive, the too curious, the too irrepressible, but obviously happy Chinese children who swarm about him, the Occidental tourist might do well to recall an observation made by a criminal in an English police court. When imposing the sentence, the justice reprimanded the prisoner for being drunk and disorderly and for miscellaneous cracking of the skulls of innocent spectators. The culprit replied simply: "Yes, yer 'onor, but it's a poor 'art as never rejoices!"

II.

We have often tried to imagine the nature of the report which the great Swiss educator, Pestalozzi, and his greater pupil, Froebel, would have indited, had they been sent to China to examine the 'school system' of that empire. The essence of the teaching and practice of these world-renowned educators was that the pedagogue must enter into the life and being of the child whom he teaches, and must summon the mental faculties by a natural process, leading them on step by step without fatigue and with delighted interest, until the pupil has in reality taught himself what he needs most to know. The essence of Chinese teaching is to introduce mental concepts into the minds of the scholars, just as lime is worked into the texture of the cashbags used all over the empire, by incessant pounding on a resisting surface.

When a Chinese boy has attained the age of seven and eight years, the question is sometimes raised whether he shall be sent to school. We say "sometimes," for it is but a minute fraction of the whole number of Chinese boys who ever see the inside of a school-room, and of that small fraction but a miscroscopic part ever continue their studies to such a point as to make any practical use of what has been learned.

The Chinese language, as may be known to some of our readers, is of a pictorial nature. The almost infinite variety of its characters may all be distributed into a comparatively small number of genera, and these again into a large number of species. To us the inordinately large mass of unfamiliar symbols seems a load too great to be borne by any single mind, but that is mainly because we come to them from across a wide gulf, and are not to the manner born. If Chinese were the native tongue of any considerable number of Anglo-Saxons (the reader will kindly pardon the self-contradictory nature of the supposition, for the sake of the conclusion to be drawn) it would not be long ere a way would be invented by which the study of Chinese characters and idioms would be made simple and even attractive to the youthful Saxon-Chinese who were obliged to undertake the task of learning. What that process would be, we positively decline to explain, but we have no hesitation in affirming, in general terms, that it would be as nearly as possible the exact opposite of the process to which every Chinese boy is subjected as soon as he enters his school, and as long as he stays in it.

It is a truly amazing fact, that among the tens of millions of educated Chinese, who are constantly employed in attempting to educate children and youth, there never arises a single one who, perceiving the fatal folly of the means now in use (and which so far as we know has always been in use), has the intelligence to introduce a better way. Probably there have been such attempts; there surely must have been, but the rooted conservatism of the people has immediately defeated them. This is rendered inevitable by the fact that the object of education is supposed to be, not the learning acquired, much less the discipline of mind gained in acquiring it, but a literary degree. The pursuit of a degree is the kernel of the whole system of Chinese education. The examination halls, in every prefectural city, are as a rule chocked with aspirants for the lower degree, but a small number of whom can possibly attain it. But the whole theory of Chinese education is based upon the supposition that each child who studies at all, *must* be put in training for the whole course, covering a period varying from ten years or more, to a whole life-time. During the first five or six years of the young scholar's life at school, there is ordinarily not a single oasis of any size in the whole vast desert which he has traversed. One of his first achievements is the memorising and recognition by sight of the characters in the Family Surmanes. The utility of this study is obvious at a glance, but a table of logarithms could scarcely be more uninterested. It is a characteristic Chinese circumstance, that many of the editions of these surmanes are very far indeed from being complete, as tested by the lists of characters which in K'anghi's Dictionary are given as in use for this purpose. The Trimetrical Classic contains but few lines which could be of any human interest to a Chinese child or any other, and whatever transient gleams of interest might attach to these exceptional lines, is effectually strangled in its birth, by the universal Chinese habit of not giving any explanations of anything which is studied, until the pupil has studied for many years, by which time it is thought that nature has developed his mental powers (which his teacher has done his utmost to extinguish) to such a point that he is able to comprehend explanations! There is a story of a pupil in a Latin class who construed the line:

'*Exegi monumentum ære perennius*,'

'I have eaten a monument of brass,' in consideration of which fact he was ordered by his professor to 'Sit down and digest it, then.' Scarcely any description of the

occupation of the Chinese lad at school could be more comprehensively accurate than this somewhat inadequate translation of Horace. The pupil has indeed swallowed not one monument, but all the principal monuments of antiquity, but as for digesting them, that is a process which neither he nor his preceptor ever thought of. The pupil resembles an infant camel which should be required to take in food and water sufficient for a whole life-time in the desert, and to do it, so to speak, at a single sitting! There is reason to fear that in all parts of the world, children are tempted to look back upon their shool-days, especially the earliest ones, as the period when their joys do least abound. Their views are expressed with precision by the little girl who, being asked if she liked her school, answered 'Yes,' but upon being pressed to explain what it was that she liked, she ingenuously replied, "Coming home." The poor Chinese lad, however, has this pleasure in anticipation for a great length of time, as his school begins soon after sunrise, or even earlier, and with short intermission at noon for his dinner lasts till dark. When the midday meal is despatched, he returns to the school-house, not to play in the yard, but to drop into his place and sit like an earthenware image until the rest shall have arrived also, when the monotonous din of the bellowing, by whieh the lessons are supposed to be transferred to the memory of the learner, shows that the educational process is literally in full blast. There are in the life of this book-ridden lad no joyous Saturdays, and no regular holidays of any sort except such as he can beg or steal. Each scholar being a class by himself, his absence is of no consequence to any one else, and the teacher not infrequently pays no attention to the non-appearance of any particular pupil, who has therefore every motive to absent himself as often as he can.

III.

It is no exaggeration to say that there is nothing really intellectual in any part of the early schooling of an ordinary Chinese boy. As a rule the teacher does not concern himself with his pupils, further than to drag them over a specified course, or at least to attempt to do so. The parents of the lad are equally indifferent, or even more so. If the father can himself read, he remembers that he learned to do so by a long and thorny road, and he thinks it natural that his son should traverse it likewise. If he cannot read, he recognises the fact that he knows nothing at all about the matter, and that it is not his business to interfere. The teacher is hired to teach—let him do it. At home the pupil has no mental stimulus of any sort, no books, magazines or papers, and if he had them, his barren studies at school would not have fitted him to comprehend such literature. The range of characters which he has learned, often very imperfectly, is totally different from those in common use, and largely of no value except as a step to the classics. If the pupil goes on, as a small proportion of them do, after having theoretically mastered the classics, to study literary composition, his tasks are far more difficulty than before. Chinese composition is an exceedingly intricate study, and requires a highly developed memory, wide acquaintance with the written character, and a patience which must be almost infinite. For those who do not go so far as to learn to compose, their education may be said to be finished before it is fairly under way. When it is dead and burried, as it not improbably will be within a few years, it might appropriately have carved upon its tomb-stone, the epitaph said to have marked the resting place of a still-born infant,

> 'Since so quickly I am done for,
> I wonder what I was begun for.'

Considering the utter juicelessness of his studies, which are not inaptly compared to 'gnawing a wooden pear,' it is by no means singular that the great majority of pupils when they leave school, cast aside all their little stock of learning, as a worn-out pair of shoes belonging to their early days, but of no subsequent value. Notwithstanding the vast number of books in the lists of Chinese literature, there are very few which are popularly available. The books to be found in an average Chinese house, albeit some of the inmates can 'read,' are generally scant in number, and limited in range—perhaps the one most sure to have been read, is the historical novel called the 'Three Kingdoms.' But the style and the characters are alike far beyond the capacity of most lads who have had only five or six years of schooling. The cheap little books which are everywhere sold, are full of false characters, badly printed, and so difficult to comprehend for a boy with but a limited knowledge, but they might as well be written in Egyptian hieroglyphics. The practical result is, that the whole education of a vast number of Chinese boys has the same relation to their subsequent life, as a familiarity with the 'tones' of the Greek language, has to the business career of the man who has graduated from an English university. Ten years from Oxford, what signifies it (to any one but a professor of Greek) that "in the genitive plural of the first declension of Greek nouns, the final syllable is circumflexed, but that feminine adjectives, and participles in *os e on* are accented like the genitive masculine, but other feminine adjectives and participles are *perispomena* in the genitive plural, and that *chrestes*, *aphue*, *etesiai*, and *chlounes* in the genitive plural remain paroxytones"? Happily there are other items in the liberal

education of an English student, which will probably abide with him, while in the case of a vast multitude of Chinese lads, almost the whole of what they have with such incredible labour acquired, will vanish like the morning cloud and the early dew, and like the baseless fabric of a vision, leave not a wrack behind.

There is one incident in the life of the Chinese lad, which assumes in his eyes some degree of importance, to which most occidental boys are strangers. This is the ceremony of donning the cap, in other words of becoming a man and his marriage. The age at which this takes place is far from being a fixed one, but is often in the vicinity of sixteen. The customs observed doubtless vary, in the rural districts they frequently consist in nothing more exciting than the playing by a band of music in the evening before his marriage, and a visit on the part of the young man to each house in the village where he makes his prostration, much as at the New Year, and is henceforth to be considered a full-grown man, and is protected to some extent from snubs because he is 'only a child.' The more conspicuous part of the affair, however, is the wedding. This proceeding is based upon principles so radically different from those to which we are accustomed, that it is generally hard for a Westerner to become reconciled either to the Chinese theory or to the practice. To us, marriage seems suitable for persons who have attained, not merely years of puberty, but a certain maturity of development, compatible with the new relations which they now assume. We regard the man and wife as the basis and centre of a new family, and there is ancient and adequate authority for the doctrine that they should leave father and mother. In China it is altogether otherwise. The boy and girl who are married are not a new family, but the latest branch in a tall family tree, independent of which they have no corporate existence. It is by no means uncommon for boys to be married at the age of ten, although this is regarded as a trifle premature. The physical, intellectual, or moral development of the parties concerned, has nothing whatever to do with the matter of their marriage, which is an affair controlled by wholly different considerations. Sometimes it is hastened because an old grandmother is in feeble health and insists upon seeing the main business of life done up, before she is called away. Sometimes the motive is to settle the division of a piece of property so that it shall be impossible for the elder heirs to retreat from the settlement. Quite as often, the real motive for hastening the wedding is the felt need in the boy's family of an additional servant, which need will be supplied by the introduction of a new bride. It is for this reason that so many Chinese women are older than their husbands. When they are betrothed, the bigger they are the better, because they can do all the more work. To a Chinese, there is no more sense of incongruity in marrying a little slip of a boy, simply because he is young, and perhaps not more than half the size of his bride, than there would be in playing checkers with buttons, and then crowning the first button that happened to get to the king row. What signified whether the button is a small one or a large one since it has reached the last row, and has now a set of moves of its own, a fact which must be recognised by doubling itself. It is not otherwise with the Chinese boy. He is a double button, it is true, but he is nothing but a button still and a small one, and is but an insignificant part of a wide and complicated game. During the celebration of a Chinese wedding it does not strike the spectator that the bridegroom is the centre of interest, and the bride is so only for the time being and in consequence of the curiosity which is felt to see what sort of a bargain the family has made in getting her. The young man is ordered out of the apartment where he has been kept in ambush—according to the customs in some regions—like an ox for the sacrifice. He is to fall upon his knees at a word of command, and *k'o t'o* with intermittent sequence to a great variety of persons, until his knees are stiff and his legs lame. His eyes are fixed upon the ground, as if in deepest humility, and the most awkward Chinese youth will perform the details of this trying ordeal with a natural grace, with which the most well-bred occidental youth could scarcely hope to vie, and which he assuredly could not hope to surpass. When the complicated protracted ceremonies are all over, our young lad is, it is true, a married man, but he is not the 'head' of any family, not even of his own. He is still under the same control of his father as before, his bride is under the control of the mother-in-law, to a degree which it is difficult for us to comprehend. If the youthful husband is trying to learn to compose essays, his marriage does not at all interrupt his educational enterprise and as soon as the ceremonies are over, he goes on just as before. If he is dull, and cannot make the 'seven empty particles'—the terror of the inexpert Chinese essayist—fit into his laborious sentences to the satisfaction of his teacher, he is not unlikely to be beaten over the head for his lack of critical acumen, and can then go weeping home to have his wife stick a black gummy plaster over the area of his chastisement. We have known a Chinese boy who had the dropsy in an aggravated form but who could not be persuaded to take a single dose of medicine that was at all bitter. If he was pressed to do so by his fond mother, he either 'rowed,' or cried. If he was not

allowed to eat two whole water-melons at a time his tactics were the same, a domestic scene either of violent temper, or of dismal howling grief. He was merely prolonging into youth the plan universally adopted in the childhood of Chinese children. Yet this sensitive infant of seventeen, had been married for several years, and leaves a widow to mourn the circumstance that drugs, dropsy, and water-melons, have blighted her existence.

The Chinese boy generally learns well two valuable lessons, and the thoroughness with which they are mastered does much to atone for the great defects of his training in other regards. He learns obedience and respect for authority, and he learns to be industrious. In most cases, the latter quality is the condition of his continued existence and those who refuse to submit to the inexorable law, are disposed of by that law, to the great advantage of the survivors. But of intellectual independence, he has not the faintest conception or even a capacity of comprehension. He does as others do, and neither knows nor can imagine any other way. If he is 'educated,' his mind is like a subsoil pipe, filled with all the drainage which has ever run through the ground. A part of this drainage originally came it is true from the skies, but it has been considerably altered in its constituents since that time ; and a much larger part is a wholly human secretion, painfully lacking in chemical purity. In any case this is the content of his mind, and it is all of its content If, on the other hand, the Chinese youth is uneducated, his mind is like an open ditch, partly vacant, and partly full of whatever is flowing or blowing over the surface. He is not indeed destitute of humility, in fact, he has a most depressing amount of it. He knows that he knows nothing, that he never did, never shall, never can know anything, and also that it makes very little difference what he knows. He has a blind respect for learning, but no idea of gathering any crumbs thereof for himself. The long, broad black and hopeless shadow of Confucianism is over him. It means a high degree of intellectual cultivation for the few, who are necessarily narrow and often bigoted, and for the many it means a lifetime of intellectual stagnation. Measured by what it has totally failed to do, when it might and should have done it, we charge Confucianism with being intellectually one of the most elaborate, compendious, and far-reaching failures, which has ever wrought out its ultimate results upon this distracted earth !

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE CHINESE GIRL.

I.

The Chinese are as practical a people as ever had a national existence, and we know of no reason to suppose that the Chinese ever had the least doubt that a substantial equality of the sexes in point of numbers is a condition of the continued propagation of the race. Certainly no race was ever more careful to keep itself propagated, or has ever met with greater success in the undertaking. How happens it, then, that the Chinese are almost the only people boasting an ancient and developed civilisation who despise their own daughters who are married into the families of others, and are by that process lost to their own? and because according to ancient custom they can offer no sacrifices for their parents, when the latter are dead. It is for this reason that the popular saying declares that the most ideally excellent daughter (literally a daughter with the virtues of the eighteen Lo-hans) is not equal to a splay-footed son. This sentiment is endorsed by all Chinese consciously and unconsciously, in a manner to show that it is in woven in the very fibres of their being. Its ultimate root is the same as that of so many other human opinions, pure selfishness.

The Chinese girl when she makes her first appearance in the world is very likely to be unwelcome, though this is by no means invariably the case. The ratio in which fortune-tellers allot happiness is generally about five sons to two daughters. "Whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." With theories like those of the Chinese about the unavailability of daughters for the performance of ancestral rites, and with the Chinese nature as it is, it is not to be wondered at that the great pressure of poverty leads to the crime of infanticide upon an enormous scale. For aught that appears, this has always been the case. It is not that the Chinese conscience does not recognise the murder of girl babies as wrong, but that the temptation to such murder, especially

the temptation to the disappointed and often abused mother, is too strong to be resisted by any motives which have the opportunity to act upon her. Much has already been done by those who have had most opportunity to learn the facts, toward exhibiting the real practice of the Chinese in the matter of destroying female infants. Yet no more can be safely predicated than that this is a crime which to some extent everywhere prevails, and in some places to such a degree as seriously to affect the proportion of the sexes. It seems to be most common in the maritime provinces of the southern part of China, in some districts of which it is by the Chinese themselves regarded as a terrible and a threatening evil. Native tract societies publish books exhorting the people against the practice, and magistrates occasionally issue proclamations forbidding it, but it is evident that the nature of the offence is such that no laws can touch it, and nothing short of the elevation of the mothers themselves to a far higher point of view than they now occupy, can have any permanent effect upon Chinese female infanticide. Next to the destruction of the lives of female infants, the Chinese practice most revolting to our western ideas is the sale of their daughters, at all periods from infancy up to a marriageable age. The usages of different parts of the empire vary widely, but the sale of girls, like infanticide, seems to flourish most in the maritime provinces of the south, where it is conducted as openly as any other traffic. That the parents are generally impelled to this extreme step simply by the pressure of poverty we are quite ready to believe. Yet the knowledge that the girl must be parted from her family at a later period, and that this parting is irrevocable, must tend to reconcile many Chinese parents to an anticipation, by a few years, of the inevitable. Of the miseries which girls who have been thus sold are likely to endure, it is unnecessary to speak in detail, but enough is known on the subject to lead us to regard the practice with horror. If the parents do not feel able to keep their daughter until she is old enough to be married, and yet do not wish to sell her, Chinese custom has invented another expedient, which is a compromise between the two.

This is the well known "rearing-marriage," by which the girl is made over to the family into which she is to be married, and is by that family brought up, and married whenever their convenience dictates. There are manifest and grave objections to this practice, but there can be no doubt that it is far better than the custom of child marriages, which lead to so much wretchedness in India. In some instances the relations with the family of the girl are wholly broken off, when she is taken for a "rearing-marriage," and in all cases it is regarded as a confession of poverty and weakness, which places the girl's family at much more than their usual disadvantage, at best sufficiently great. When a girl is brought up in the family the son of which is to become her future husband, it is of course wholly out of the question that the parties should not have the fullest opportunities to become acquainted with each other's disposition, however they may be forbidden by usage to speak to one another. There is and can be very little sentiment about Chinese matches, but anything which tends to make the parties to one of these matches better able to adapt themselves to the inevitable friction of after life, cannot fail to have its advantages. Whether the parties to a "rearing-marriage" are or are not on the whole happier than those married in the ordinary way, is a question which no Chinese would be likely to ask, for the reason that he has no associations connecting marriage with happiness, but rather the reverse, and if the question is proposed by a foreigner, he is not likely to be made much the wiser by the replies which he receives.

The practice of binding the feet of Chinese girls is familiar to all who have the smallest knowledge of China, and requires but the barest mention. It is almost universal throughout China, yet with some conspicuous exeptions, as among the Hakkas of the south, an exception for which it is not easy to account. The custom forcibly illustrates some of the innate traits of Chinese character, especially the readiness to endure great and prolonged suffering in attaining to a standard, merely for the sake of appearances. There is no other non-religious custom peculiar to the Chinese which is so utterly opposed to the natural instincts of mankind, and yet which is at the same time so dear to the Chinese, and which would be given up with more reluctance.

It is well-known that the greatest emperor who ever sat upon the throne of China dared not risk his authority in an attempt to put down this custom, although his father had successfully imposed upon the Chinese race the wearing of the queue as a badge of subjection. A quarter of a millennium of Tartar rule seems to have done absolutely nothing towards modifying the practice of foot-binding in favour of the more rational one of the governing race, except to a limited extent in the capital itself. But a few *li* away from Peking, the old habits hold their iron sway, and unless some powerful force from without should be brought to bear, will apparently continue to do so until the end of time.

The observations which may be made with regard to the industry of Chinese boys, are equally applicabble—*mutatis mutandis*—to Chinese girls. In all lands and in all climes, "woman's work is never

'done", and this is most especially true of China, where machinery has not yet expelled the primitive processes of what is literally manufacture, or work by the hand. The care of silk-worms, and the picking, spinning, and weaving of cotton, are largely the labour of women, to which the girls are introduced at a very early age. The sewing for a Chinese family is a serious matter, especially as the number of families who can afford to hire help in this line is a very trifling proportion. But aside from this employment, in which a Chinese girl who expects to be acceptable to the family of her mother-in-law must be expert, girls can also be made useful in almost any line of home work to which the father may be devoted. In the country districts all over the empire, boys and girls alike are sent out to scratch together as much fuel as possible, for the preparation of the food, and this continues in the case of the girls until they are too large to go to any distance from home. It is not an unmeaning appellation, which is given to girls generally, that of *ya-t'ou*, or "slave-girl," used just as we should say "daughter." To a foreigner, this sounds much like the term "nigger" applied to black men, but to the Chinese there is a fitness in the designation, which they refuse to surrender.

With the exception of such limited raids as she may have been able to make in early childhood, and occasional visits to relatives, most Chinese girls never go anywhere, to speak of, and live what is literally the existence of a frog in a well. Tens of thousands of them have never been two miles away from the village in which they happened to be born, with the occasional exception of the visit to the mother's family just mentioned, where they are not improbably regarded as terrible beings who cannot be exterminated, but who are to be as much as possible repressed. If the nieces on the mother's side are numerous, as is often the case, there is some reason for dread of the visits, on the part of the bread-winners, for no Chinese mother can be dissociated from her flock of children, whose appetites are invariably several horse-power strong, and who, like their elders, are all excessively fond of enjoying "the rare and ineffable pleasure of eating at somebody else's expense."

It is when the married daughters of a large family have all returned to their parents to spend a few days or weeks, that the most dramatic scenes of childhood occur. Self-control and unselfishness have not been a feature in the culture of any one of the numerous cousins thus brought together in a cluster which frequently resembles those on the inside of a bee-hive. Each of the young generation has the keenest instinct for getting as much of the best of what is to be had, as any one else, and if possible more. This leads to occasional "scenes of confusion, and creature complaints", in which each small participant publishes his or her version of the particular squabble in question in acrid tones, which soon summon the whole establishment to the scene of action. Judicious parents would punish the children all round for their complicity in such a quarrel, which is most often based upon alleged or supposed inequalities in distribution of food. But Chinese parents are seldom judicious, and the most that can be expected is that the mother will call off her child or children, and "yell" it, or them. "Yelling" a person is the act of proclaiming in a loud and piercing voice the disapprobation on the part of the "yeller" of the conduct of the "yellee," often accompanied by reviling language, and frequently also with promises to "beat" and "kill" the said "yellee" in the event of further provocation. These remarks are interpreted by the "yellee" as a hint to "shut up", a feat which is at length accomplished after a period of more or less spasmodic and convulsive recrimination. But if, as often happens, each of the mothers feels called upon from a high sense of duty to take a firm stand for the rights of her offspring, the case becomes much more serious. Each of the mothers will then scream simultaneously, to the accompaniment of the wails, yells, and reviling of the whole dozen or more of her posterity, while above the general clamour may be distinctly caught the shrill shrieks of the grandmother, whose views, whatever difficulty they may have in getting themselves heard, must eventually prevail when peace once more reigns in the domestic tea-pot. After one of these family cyclones, the atmosphere gradually becomes cleared again, and things go on as before; but we have known a particularly "spunky" married daughter, who exhibited her dissatisfaction with the terms of settlement of a dispute of this sort by refusing to speak to her sisters, for some days together.

With the humdrum routine of her life at home, the occasional visits to relatives, and now and then a large fair or a theatrical exhibition, the Chinese girl grows to be what we should call a "young school-girl," by which time all her friends begin to be very uneasy about her. This uneasiness, we need scarcely remark, has not the smallest connection with her intellectual nature, which, so far as any culture which it receives is concerned, might as well be non-existent. Unless her father happens to be a schoolmaster, and at home with nothing to do, he never thinks of teaching his daughter to read. Even in the case of boys, this would be exceptional and irregular, but in the case of girls it is felt to be proposterous. And why? asks the incredulous foreigner. It will take the average Chinese a long time to get at the nature of his objection, stripped of superfluous verbiage, and when he does so he will not have stated the whole of the

case, nor have gone to the root of the matter. The real difficulty is, that to educate a girl is like weeding the field of some other man. It is like putting a gold chain around the neck of some one else's puppy, which may at any moment be whistled off, and then what has become of the chain? It is a proverbially mean man in China, who, when marrying his daughter, wants to be paid for the food he has wasted upon her up to the date of marriage. But the expression illustrates clearly one of the underlying assumptions of Chinese society, that it is the body of the girl for which the parents are responsible, and not the mind. To almost any Chinese, it would probably appear a self-evident proposition that to spend time, strength, and much more money in educating the daughter-in-law of some else is a sheer waste. But, you say to him, she is your daughter. "Not after she is married," he replies; "she is theirs, let them educate her themselves if they want her educated."

"Why should I teach her how to read, write and reckon, when it will never do me any good?" With which utilitarian inquiry, the education of most Chinese girls has been banished from human thought for the space of some millenniums.

II.

The anxiety which all her friends begin to feel about a Chinese girl, as soon as she attains any considerable size, is exhibited in the inquiries which are made about her whenever she happens to be spoken of. These inquiries do not concern her character or her domestic accomplishments, much less her intellectual capacity—of which she has, theoretically, none to speak of—but they may all be summed up in the single phrase, "Is she said?", meaning by the term "said" "betrothed." If the reply should be in the negative, the intelligence is received in much the same way as we should receive the information that a foreign child had been allowed to grow to the age of sixteen without having been taught anything whatever out of books. "Why?", we should say; "what is the explanation of this strange neglect?" The instinctive feeling of a Chinese in regard to a girl is that she should be betrothed as soon as possible. This is one of the many points in regard to which it is almost impossible for the Chinese and the Anglo-Saxon to come to terms. To the latter the betrothal of a mere child, scarcely in her teens, is a piece of absolute barbarity. As soon as a Chinese girl is once betrothed, she is placed in different relations to the universe generally. She is no longer allowed such freedom as hitherto, although that may have been little enough. She cannot go anywhere, because it would be "inconvenient". She might be seen by some member of the family into which she is to marry, than which it is hardly possible to think of anything more horrible. "Why?" the irrepressible Occidental inquires, and is quenched by the information that "it would not be proper." Why it would not be proper no one can ever tell, except that it never was proper, and therefore is not so now, and therefore never will be. The imminent risk that the girl might in some unguarded moment be actually seen by the family of the future mother-in-law is a reason why so few engagements for girls are made in the town in which the girl lives, an arrangement which would seem to be for the convenience of all parties, in a great variety of ways. It would put a stop to the constant deceptions practised by the middle-women, or professional match-makers, whose only object is to carry through whatever match has been proposed, in order to reap the percentage which will accrue to the agent. It would do away with the waste of time and money involved in transporting brides from one of their homes to the other, often at great inconvenience and loss. It would make the interchange of little courtesies between the families easy and frequent. But for all these advantages the Chinese do not seem to care, and the most frequent explanation of the neglect of them is that there would be the risk already mentioned. When these two families are such as would in the ordinary course of events be likely to meet, nothing is more amusing to a foreigner than to watch the struggles which are made to avert such a catastrophe. One is reminded of some of our childhood's games, in which one party is "poison" and the other party is liable to be "poisoned" and must at all hazards keep out of the way. The only difference between the cases is that in the Chinese game, *each party* is afraid of being "poisoned," and will struggle to prevent it. There is one set of circumstances, however, in which, despite their utmost efforts, Fate is too much both for the poisoners and the poisoned. If during the betrothal a death of an older person takes place in the family of the mother-in-law, it is generally thought necessary that the girl (who is considered as already "belonging" to that family) should be present and should perform the same reverence to the coffin of the deceased as if she had been already married. She is (theoretically) their daughter; why should she not come and lament like the rest?* If it is possible to arrange it, however, the marri-

* We have known occasional instances in which a betrothed girl was not required to attend the funeral of her future father-in-law or mother-in-law, a trying ordeal which she must be glad to escape. Sometimes when she does attend, she merely kneels to the coffin, but does not "lament," for usage is in this, as in other particulars, very capricious.

age will be hastened, in the event of a death of a person belonging to an older generation, even if a later date had been previously set.

To a foreigner, the Chinese habit of early engagements appears to have no single redeeming feature. It hampers both families, with no apparent corresponding advantages, if indeed there are advantages of any kind. It assumes, what is far from certain, and often not at all likely, that the relative position of the two families will continue to be the same. This assumption is contradicted by universal experience. Time and change happen to all, and the insecurity of human affairs is nowhere more manifest than in the tenure of Chinese property. Families are going up and coming down all the time. It is a well settled principle in China that matches should be between those who are in the same general circumstances. Disregard of this rule is sure to bring trouble. But if early betrothals are the practice, the chances of material alteration in the condition of each of the families are greatly increased. When he is engaged the character of the boy, upon which so much of a bride's happiness is to depend, has not perhaps been formed. Even if it has been formed, it is generally next to impossible for the girl's family to learn anything authentic as to what the character is, though to all appearance it would be so easy for them to ascertain by sub-latent methods. But as a rule, it would appear that they do not concern themselves much about the matter after the engagement is proposed and accepted, and at no time do they give it a hundredth part of the investigation which it seems to us to warrant. If the boy becomes a gambler, a profligate, or dissipated in any other way, there is no retreat for the family of the girl, no matter to what extremities they may be driven. Chinese violation of the most ordinary rules of prudence and common sense in the matter of the betrothal of their daughters is, to a westerner, previous to experience and observation, almost incredible.

A Chinese marriage engagement begins when the red cards have been interchanged, ratifying the agreement. These are in some districts formidable documents, almost as large as a crib-blanket, and are very important as evidence in case of future trouble. It is very rare to hear of the breaking of a marriage engagement in China, though such instances do doubtless occur. In a case of this sort the card of the boy's family had been delivered to the other family, at which point the transaction is considered to be definitely closed. But an uncle of the betrothed girl, although younger than the father of the girl, created a disturbance and refused to allow the engagement to stand. This made the matter very serious, but as the younger brother was inflexible, there was no help for it but to send the red acceptance card back by the middleman who brought it. This also was a delicate matter, but a Chinese is seldom at a loss for expedients, when a disagreeable thing must be done. He selected a time when all the male members of the boy's family were in the wheatfield, and then threw the card declining the match into the yard of the family of the boy, and went his way. None of the women of the family could read, and it was not until the men returned that it was discovered what the document was. The result was a law-suit of portentous proportions, in which an accusation was brought against both the father of the girl and against the middleman. This case was finally adjusted by a money payment. The delivery of the red cards is, as we have remarked, the beginning of the engagement, the culmination being the arrival of the bride in her chair at the home of her husband. The date of this event is wholly dependent upon the pleasure of the boy's family. Whatever accessories the wedding may have, the arrival of the bride is the *de facto* completion of the contract. This becomes evident in the case of second marriages, where there is often, and even proverbially, no ceremony of any sort which must be observed. The Chinese imperial calendar designates the days which are the most felicitous for weddings, and it constantly happens that on these particular days there will be what the Chinese term "red festivities" in almost every village. The same bridal sedan-chair may be used many times. In regions where it is the custom to have all weddings in the forenoon, second marriages are put off until the afternoon, or even postponed until the evening, marking their minor importance. That the only *essential* feature of a Chinese wedding is the delivery of the bride at her husband's home, is strikingly shown in those not very uncommon instances in which a Chinese is married without himself being present at all. It is usually considered a very ill omen to change the date set for a wedding, especially to postpone it. Yet it sometimes happens that the young man is at a distance from home, and fails to return in time. Or the bridegroom may be a scholar, and find that the date of an important examination coincides with the day set for his wedding. In such a case he will probably choose "business before pleasure" and the bride will be "taken delivery of" by older members of his family, without disturbing his own literary ambitions.

Of the details of Chinese weddings we do not intend to speak. There are wide variations of usage in almost all particulars, though the general plan is doubtless much the same. The variations appertain, not to the ceremonies of the wedding alone, but

to all the proceedings from beginning to end. It is supposed that the explanation of the singular and sometimes apparently unaccountable variation in these and other usages, found all over China, may be due to the persistent survival of customs which have been handed down from the time of the Divided Kingdom. But very considerable differences in usage are to be met with in regions not far apart, and which were never a part of different kingdoms. The saying runs, "Customs vary every ten *li*," which seems at times to be a literal truth.

In the south of China, as we have already remarked, the transfer of money at the engagement of a daughter, from the parents of the boy to those of the girl, assumes for all practical purposes the aspect of a purchase, which, pure and simple, it often is. But in other parts of China we never hear of such a transaction, but only of a dowry from the bride's family, much in the manner of Western lands at times. Vast sums are undoubtedly squandered by the very wealthy Chinese at the weddings of their daughters, and it is a common adage that to such expenditures there is no limit. But in weddings in the ordinary walks of life, to which all but a small fraction of the people belong, the impression which will be made upon the observant foreigner will generally be that there is a great amount of shabby gentility, a thin veneer of display beneath which it is easy to see the real texture. The bridal chair is often itself a fit emblem of this truth. Looked at from a distance, it appears to be of the most gorgeous description, but on a nearer view it is frequently perceived to be a most unattractive framework covered with a gaudy set of trappings sometimes much worn and evidently the worse for wear. In some cases there is a double framework, the outer of which can be lifted entirely off, being too clumsy to be carried into a courtyard. The inner chair can be carried through the narrow doors of any Chinese yard, or, if required, into the house itself. The bride is no sooner out of the chair than the process of dismantling the bridal-chair begins, in the immediate sight of all the guests, and as a matter of course. The Chinese is not a victim of sentiment, and he fails to see anything incongruous in these proceedings. It not infrequently happens that the resplendent garment worn by the bride is hired for the occasion, a fact of which the guests present are not likely to be ignorant. We once saw a garment of this sort, which the bride had just taken off, delivered to the headman in charge of the bridal chair and of the accompanying paraphernalia. Upon examining it, to make sure that it was in as good condition as when it was hired, this man found, or professed to find, a grease-spot upon it, which not only attracted his attention but excited his wrath. He began to talk in loud and excited tones, waxing more and more furious until the guests were all called away from their other occupations to listen to the dispute. Yet the foreign spectator was probably the only person present to whom it occurred that this was an untimely and unseemly proceeding, out of harmony with the time and the circumstances.

The arrival of a first baby is, in the life of a Chinese wife, a very different event from the like occurrence in the life of a wife in Occidental lands. If the child is a boy, the joy of the whole household is of course great, but if on the contrary it is a girl, the depression of the spirits of the entire establishment is equally marked. In such a case, the young wife is often treated with coldness, and not infrequently with harshness, even if, as sometimes happens, she is not actually beaten for her lack of discretion in not producing a son. If she has had several daughters in succession, especially if she has borne no son or none which has lived, her life cannot be a pleasant one.

There is a story of a certain noble English lord, who had more daughters than any other member of the aristocracy. When on the Continent travelling, he walked out one day with six of his daughters. Some one who saw him, remarked to a companion, "Poor man." The noble lord overheard the observation, and turning to the person who made it, replied, "Not so 'poor' as you think; I have six more at home"! It is questionable whether any Chinese could be found who would not sympathise with the comment of the bystander, or who would agree with the reply of the father. Indeed, we have serious doubts whether, among all the innumerable myriads of this race, there ever lived a Chinese who had twelve daughters living at once.

It is one of the postulates of Chinese propriety that however much a wife may continue to visit at the maternal home, (and on this point the usages in some regions are very liberal) her children must all be born at their father's house. This is a rule of such unbending rigour that a breach of it is considered a deep disgrace, and in the effort to avoid it, women will sometimes submit to extreme inconveniences, and run the most serious risks, not infrequently, it is said, meeting in consequence with painful and humiliating accidents. To the Occidental question as to the reason for this powerful prejudice against a confinement at a mother's home, the Chinese are able to give no better reply than an affirmation that if such an event should happen, the mother's family may be expected to become very poor. This superstition is so strong that in some localities, if such an event has happened, it is customary for the family of the husband to

harness a team to a plough, and, proceeding to the home of the girl's parents, plough up their court-yard. The son-in-law must also cook a kettle full of millet or rice for his mother-in-law, by which means the dire extremity of poverty may be avoided. Perhaps, after all, the idea at the bottom of these singular performances is merely the thoroughly Chinese one that, if a married daughter and her children are to come upon her mother's family for their support, poverty will be the certain result, a view which has in it some reason. There is the highest Chinese classical authority for the proposition that if a mother is really anxious to do the best which she can for her infant, although she may not succeed perfectly she will not come far short of success. There is equally trustworthy Occidental medical authority for the statement that as applied to Chinese women this proposition is a gross error. Undoubtedly superstition directly or indirectly destroys the lives of many Chinese children. But this cause, which is complex in its operations, is probably much less efficient for evil than the utter lack, on the part of the parents, of the instinct of conformity to the most obvious of Nature's laws. Nursing children, as well as those a little larger, are allowed to eat almost any article of food at random, to swallow pieces of raw sweet potatoes, and turnips, to suck the tobacco-pipe of their grandfather, and in general to have whatever they want. At the earliest age, they are subjected to the most violent alternations of heat and cold, are carried abroad bare-headed and are often suddenly chilled, sometimes fatally. A very large percentage of Chinese infants must die in their first year not infrequently from fits, the causes of which are sufficiently obvious to foreigners who know the carelessness with which Chinese children are handled. We have known a Chinese mother, in a moment of dissatisfaction, to throw her young and naked infant out of doors into a snow-bank. Another cut off one of her baby's fingers with a pair of dull shears, to save it from fits, and was rewarded by seeing it die in convulsions. Such a practice is said to be not uncommon. "Who would have supposed that it would have done so?" her mother remarked to a foreigner. But even if the young mother were endowed with the best of judgment, it would still be impossible for her to secure proper care for her children, for the reason that she is herself only a "child"* and in her management of her children, as in other affairs, is wholly subject to the dictation of her mother-in-law, as well as to the caprices of a platoon of aunts, grandmothers, &c., with whom nearly all Chinese court-yards swarm.

The severe labour entailed upon Chinese women in the drudgery of caring for large families, assisting in gathering the crops, and other outside toils, and the great drafts made upon their physical vitality by bearing and nursing so many children, amply suffice to account for the nearly universally observed fact that these women grow old rapidly. A Chinese bride, handsome at the age of eighteen, will be faded at thirty, and at fifty wrinkled and ugly.

III.

The fact that Chinese girls are married so young, and that they have not been taught those lessons of self-control which it is so important for them to learn, suffices to demonstrate the absolute necessity for the existence of the Chinese mother-in-law as an element in the family. A great deal is heard of the tyranny and cruelty of these mothers-in-law, and there is a firm basis of fact for all that is so often said upon that point. But it must at the same time be borne in mind, that without her, the Chinese family would go to utter ruin. The father-in-law is not only unfitted to take the control which belongs to his wife, even were he at home all the time, which would seldom be the case, but propriety forbids him to do any such thing, even were he able. In families where a mother-in-law is lacking, there are not unlikely to be much greater evils than the worst mother-in-law. Abuse of the daughter-in-law is so common a circumstance, that unless it be especially flagrant, it attracts very little attention.

It would be wholly incorrect to represent this as the normal or the inevitable condition to which Chinese brides are reduced, but it is not too much to affirm that no bride has any adequate security against such abuse. It assumes all varieties of forms, from incessant scolding, up to the most cruel treatment. If it is carried to an extreme pitch, the mother's family will interfere, not legally for that they can not do, but by brute force. In a typical case of this sort, where the daughter-in-law had been repeatedly and shamefully abused by the family of her husband, which had been remonstrated with in vain by the family of the girl, the latter family mustered a large force, went to the house of the mother-in-law, destroyed the furniture, beat the other family severely, and dragged the old mother-in-law out into the street, where she was left screaming with what strength remained to her, and covered with blood, in which condition she was seen by foreigners. These proceedings are designed as a practical protest against tyranny and an intimation that sauce for a young goose may be in like manner sauce for an older

* A Chinese woman whose parents are living, is constantly referred to not only as a "girl," but as an unmarried girl *(ku-niang)*, although she may be herself the mother of half a dozen children.

one also. One would suppose that the only outcome of such a disturbance as this, would be a long and bitter lawsuit, wasting the property of each of the parties, and perhaps reducing them to ruin. But with that eminent practicality which characterises the Chinese, the girl was carried off to the home of her parents, "peace-talkers" intervened, and the girl was returned to her husband's home upon the promise of better treatment. This would probably be secured, just in proportion to the ability of the girl's family to enforce it. In another case reported to the writer, similar in its nature to the one just mentioned, the girl was sent to her husband, after "peace-talkers" had adjusted the affair, and was locked up by the mother-in-law in a small room, with only one meal a day. Within a year, she had hanged herself. It is not the ignorant and the uneducated only who thus take the law into their own hands, on behalf of injured daughters. We have heard of a case in which the father of the girl who drowned herself, was a literary graduate. He raised a band of men, went to the home of his son-in-law, pulled down the gate-house to the premises and some of the buildings. In the resulting law-suit he was severely reproved by the district magistrate, who told him that he had no right to assume to avenge his own wrongs, and that he was only saved from a beating in court by his literary degree. A still more striking example was offered by an official of the third rank, whose daughter's wrongs moved him to raise an armed band and make an attack upon the house of the son-in-law. This proved to be strong and not easily taken, upon which the angry Taotai contented himself with reviling the whole family at the top of his voice, exactly as a coolie would have done. Wrongs which can only be met with such acts as this, on the part of those who are the most conservative members of Chinese society, must be very real and very grievous. In the very numerous cases in which a daughter-in-law is driven to suicide, by the treatment which she receives, the subsequent proceedings will depend mainly upon the number and standing of her relatives. The first thing is to notify the family of the deceased that she has died, for without their presence the funeral cannot take place, or if it should take place, the body would have to be exhumed, to satisfy her friends that the death was a natural one, and not due to violence, which is always likely to be suspected. A Chinese in the employ of the writer, was summoned one day to see his married daughter in another village, who was said to be not "very well." When the father arrived, he found her hanging by her girdle to a beam!

In cases of this sort, a law-suit is exceptional. There are several powerful considerations which act as deterrents from such a step as sending in an accusation. It is almost always next to impossible to prove the case of the girl's family, for the reason that the opposite party can always so represent the matter as to throw the blame on the girl. In one such instance, the husband brought into court a very small woman's shoe: explaining that he had scolded his wife for wearing so small a one, which unfitted her for work. He alleged that she then reviled him, for which he struck her (of which there were marks), whereupon she drowned herself. To a defence like this, it is impossible for the girl's family to make any reply whatever. The accusation is not brought against the husband, but against the father-in-law, for practically the law does not interfere between husband and wife. It is only necessary for the husband to admit the fact of having beaten his wife, alleging as a reason that she was "unfilial" to his parents, to screen himself completely. We have heard of a suit where in reply to a claim of this sort, the brother of the girl testified that she had been beaten previous to the alleged "unfilial" conduct. This seemed to make the magistrate angry, and he ordered the brother to receive several hundred blows for his testimony, and decided that the husband's family should only be required to provide a cheap willow-wood coffin for the deceased. Another even more efficient cause deterring from such law-suits, is the necessity of holding an inquest over the girl's body. This is conducted with the utmost publicity, upon the Oriental plan of letting the public see how the matter really stands. A threshing floor is turned into an official arena, a set of mat-sheds are put up, and the whole village soon swarms with yamên-runners. The corpse of the deceased is laid uncovered on a mat exposed to the sight of every one, before and during the inquest. In order to avoid the shame of such exposure, the most bitter enemies are often willing enough to put the matter in the hands of "peace talkers." These represent the village of each of the principals, and they meet to agree upon the terms of settlement. These terms will depend altogether upon the wealth or otherwise of the family of the mother-in-law. If this family is a rich one, the opposite party always insist upon bleedings it to the utmost practicable extent. Every detail of the funeral is arranged to be as expensive to the family as possible. There must be a cypress-wood coffin, of a specified size and thickness, a certain variety of funeral clothes, often far in excess of what the coffin could by any possibility contain, and some of them made perhaps of silk or satin. A definite amount is required to be spent in hiring Buddhist or Taoist priests, or both, to read masses at the funeral. It is considered disgraceful to compound with the

family of the mother-in-law, by receiving a money payment, instead of exacting all this funeral show, but doubtless such compositions are sometimes made. As a business arrangement merely, it is evidently more to the interest of all parties, to pay the girl's relatives say two hundred strings of cash, rather than to expend a thousand strings on a funeral which can do no one any good. But Chinese sensitiveness to public sentiment is so extreme, that such settlements for a mere transfer of cash must be comparatively rare. The wedding outfit of a bride is often very extensive, but in case of her suicide none of it goes back to her family. We have heard from eye-witnesses of many cases in which huge piles of clothing which had been required for the funeral of such a suicide from the family of the mother-in-law, have been burned in a vast heap at the grave. We know of one instance in which all the wedding outfit, which had been a large one, wardrobes, tables, mirrors, ornaments, &c., was taken out upon the street and destroyed in the presence of the girl's family. The motive to this is of course revenge, but the ultimate effect of such proceedings is to act as an imperfect check upon the behaviour of the mother-in-law and her family toward the daughter-in-law, for whom while she lives the laws of the land have no protection.

When the funeral actually takes place, under conditions such as we have described, there is great danger that despite the exertions of the "peace-talkers" from both sides, the dispute may break out anew. At sight of the girl's livid face, the result of death by strangulation, it will not be strange if, excited by the spectable, her family cry out "Let her be avenged! Let her be avenged?" To keep the women of the girl's family quiet at such a time, is beyond the power of any collection of "peace-talkers," however, numerous and respectable. If the respective parties are restrained from mutual reviling and from a fight, the funeral is regarded as a successful one. The girl's family complain of everything, the coffin, the clothing, the ornaments for the corpse, and all the appointments generally. But they are soothed by the comforting reminder that the dead are dead, and cannot be brought to life, and also that the resources of the family of the mother-in-law have been utterly exhausted, the last acre of land mortgaged to raise money for the funeral, and that they are loaded besides with a mill-stone of debt.

It is an ancient observation that one half the world does not know how the other half lives. It is quite possible to live among the Chinese for a long time without becoming practically acquainted with their modes of settling those difficulties to which their form of civilisation makes them especially liable.

The best way to study phenomena of this sort is through concrete cases. A single instance, well considered in all its bearings, may be a window which will let in more light than a volume of abstract statements. Whoever is disposed to enter into such studies will find in China the material ready to his hand, and it will not be strange if it is forced upon his attention, whether he desires to contemplate it or not, as happened to the writer in the following highly illustrative case. Many years ago, a Chinese teacher in the writer's employ had leave of absence for a definite period, but when that period had expired, he failed to make his appearance. This is so common, or rather so almost universal an occurrence in China, that it might have passed with but a temporary notice, but for the explanation which the teacher afterwards gave of his inability to return, an explanation which appeared to be so peculiar that he was requested to reduce it to the form of a written statement, of which the following is a synopsis.

An elder sister of the teacher was married to a very poor man in a village called the "Tower of the Li Family," an insignificant hamlet consisting of only four families. In a year of great famine (1878), both the sister and her husband died, leaving three sons, all married. Of these the second died, and his widow re-married. The wife of the elder nephew of the teacher also died, and this nephew married for his second wife a widow, who had a daughter of her own, twelve years of age. This widow enjoyed the not very assuring reputation of having beaten her former mother-in-law, and also of having caused the death of her first husband. The wife of the third nephew was a quarrelsome woman, and the two sisters-in-law were always at sword's points, especially as all four of the adults and their four children shared the house and land together.

In the month of August of that year, the third nephew started for a distant market, with a boat-load of water-melons. On leaving, he ordered his wife to fetch his winter garments, which she refused to do, upon which they had a fight, and he left. The next day was cold and rainy. The elder nephew was sitting in a neighbour's house, and heard his wife engaged in a violent quarrel with her sister-in-law, but he did not even rise to look into the merits of the case, and no other neighbour intervened to exhort to peace. The younger sister-in-law left the house in a fury, and from that time she disappeared. About noon her continued absence became alarming to the elder brother, who searched for her till dark, and then sent word to her mother's family, at a village called "The Little Camp", two *li* distant. This family, upon hearing of the disappearance of their daughter, raised a company of ten or a dozen persons, went

over to the "Tower of the Li Family," entered the yard, and smashed all the water-jars and other pottery-ware which they could. "Peace-talkers" emerged, and succeeded in preventing the attacking party from entering the house, or the damage would have been still greater. After they had gone, the "Lord-of-bitterness" (*i.e.* the elder brother) begged his friends to interfere and "talk peace", for as he was a resident of a small village, he could not for a moment stand before the men of "The Little Camp," which is a large village. These latter belonged to one of the numerous small sects which are styled "black-doors," or secret societies. In these societies there is often a class of persons called "Seers" or "Bright-eyes" (*ming-yen*), who profess to be able to tell what progress the pupils have made in their learning of the doctrine. Sometimes, as in this instance, they also undertake the functions of fortune-tellers. To the Bright-eye of their sect, the Little Campers applied for information as to what had become of the missing woman. In response they learned that she had been beaten to death and buried in the yard of the "Lord-of-bitterness." Upon learning this, the family of the murdered woman went to every door in their village, making a *k'o t'ou* at each door, a common and significant mode of imploring their help. Thus a large force was raised, which went to the "Tower of the Li Family," armed with spades to dig up the body. Warned of their coming, all the male residents of this latter village fled, the family of the "Lord-of-bitterness" taking refuge at the village in the house of the local constable, who had charge of several villages. The teacher in question, being a near relative of the "Lord-of bitterness," and a man of intelligence and pleasant manners, was asked to look after the house of his nephew, which he did. Owing to his presence, and his politeness, no further damage was then done to the property, but the whole yard was dug over to find the body. After the failure of this quest, the Bright-eye modified the former announcement by the revelation that the body was outside the yard, *but not more than thirty paces distant.* The search was kept up with spades and picks, by day and by night for a week. On one of these days, a brother of the missing woman espied the twelve-years-old step child of the older brother, and pursued her with a manure fork, so that she fled in terror to a well, and would have plunged into it, had not bystanders interfered to stop the pursuer. The mother thereupon attempting to fly from the village in which she had taken refuge, to another still more remote, passed along the river bank, and sat down to rest. A boy who happened to be cutting grass in the neighbourhood, recognising her, and designing to terrify her, cried out, "The people of Little Camp are after you!" On hearing these alarming words, the woman at once threw herself into the river. A relative chanced to see her, and plunged in after her, but being a mere youth with no strength for the task, both of them would have been drowned, but for the friendly help of some men who were watering a vegetable garden near by. After repeated attempts had been made by the Lord-of-bitterness to get the matter adjusted, and after the other party had refused to listen to any terms, the latter lodged an accusation in the district magistrate's yamen. The magistrate heard the case twice, but each time the family of the missing women behaved in such an unreasonable and violent manner that the official dismissed their case, merely ordering the local constable to enlist more peace-talkers, and make the parties come to some agreement. It happened that about that time another case somewhat resembling this had occurred in that neighbourhood, in which a woman was suspected of having drowned herself. On this account a sharp watch was kept at the ferry of the district city, some miles lower down the river, for any floating body. About the time of the Magistrate's decision, a woman's body appeared abreast of the ferry and was identified as that of the missing woman from the Li Family Tower. The official held an inquest, in which all parties made diligent search for wounds, but none being found, the magistrate compelled the family of the woman to affix their thumb marks to a paper recognising this fact. He also ordered the Lord-of-bitterness to buy a good coffin, clothes, and prepare other appointments for a showy funeral, including chanting by Buddhist priests, and to have the body taken to his house. He also instructed the constable once more to secure peace-talkers, to arrange the details and to hold the funeral. But the Little Campers proved to be the most obstinate of mortals, and would not only listen to no reason, but drove the peace-talkers from their village with reviling language, never so exasperating to a Chinese as when employed against those who are sacrificing their interests for those of the public. At this juncture the husband of the drowned woman returned from the water-melon market, went himself to the home of his late wife, and expostulated with her family and also urged peace through still other third parties. But the Little Campers insisted upon funeral paraphernalia which would have cost ten thousand strings of cash. One more effort at compromise was made, by the visit of an uncle of the teacher who was guarding the house of the Lord-of-bitterness, to the Little Campers. The latter now altered their demands to a payment of eight hundred strings of cash, which by much chaffering was eventually reduced to four hundred.

The Lord-of-bitterness offered two hundred and fifty strings, but this was rejected with disdain. Upon the failure of these numerous negotiations, the local constable presented another complaint to the magistrate, reciting the facts in the repeated refusal, on the part of the family of the woman, to come to any terms. The magistrate, recognising the case as one in which the relatives were resolved to make the utmost possible capital out of a dead body, ordered eight men from his own yamen to go on that very day and attend the funeral, in order to insure that there should be no breach of peace. These yamen runners, after the customary Chinese manner, hoped to be bribed to do as they were ordered, and did not go to the place at all. The Lord-of-bitterness and all his neighbours continued in obscurity, but in the interval the men from the Little Camp again gathered their hosts, and made four more visits to the premises at the Li Family Tower, breaking everything which they could lay their hands upon. The next day the yamen runners arrived, and the Lord-of-bitterness, now thoroughly exasperated, succeeded in collecting a force of several hundred men from other villages, intending at all hazards to hold the funeral and also to have a general fight, if need arose. But the men of the Little Camp failed to put in an appearance at this time, and the funeral accordingly took place at last. The friends of the woman, however, obstinately refused to consider the matter as settled, at which point the curtain falls, with a plentiful promise of future law-suits, fights and ruin.

The reader who is sufficiently interested in the inner-working of the life of the Chinese to follow the tangled thread of a tale like this, is rewarded by the perception of several important facts. It is an axiom in China that the family of the married daughter holds its head down, while the family of the man whom she has married holds its head up. But in case of the violent death of the married woman, all this is reversed, and by a natural process of re-action the family of the married woman becomes a fierce and formidable antagonist. Principles such as these have but to be put in issue between two large villages, or families, and we have the well known clan fights of southern China, in all their perennial bitterness and intensity. One of the weakest parts of the Chinese social fabric is the insecurity of the life and happiness of woman, but no structure is stronger than its weakest part, and Chinese society is no exception to this law. Every year thousands upon thousands of Chinese wives commit suicide, tens of thousands of other persons are thereby involved in serious trouble, hundreds of thousands of yet others are dragged in as co-partners in the difficulty, and millions of dollars are expended in extravagant funerals and ruinous lawsuits. And all this is the outcome of the Confucian theory that a wife has no rights which a husband is bound to respect. The law affords her no protection while she lives, and such justice as she is able with difficulty to exact is strictly a *post mortem* concession.

The reality of the evils of the Chinese system of marriages is evidenced by the extreme expedients to which unmarried girls sometimes resort, to avoid matrimony. Chinese newspapers not infrequently contain references to organised societies of young maidens, who solemnly vow never to wed. The most recent reference of this sort which has come under our observation is the following paragraph, found in the translations from the *Shih Pao* :—

SUICIDE AS A VIRTUE. 2-1-6.

There is a prevailing custom in a district called Sheingteh (順德) in the Canton province, among female society to form different kinds of sisterhoods such as "All pure" sisterhoods, "Never-to-be-married" sisterhoods, etc. Each sisterhood consists of about ten young maidens who swear vows to Heaven never to get married, as they regard marriages as something horrid, believing that their married lives would be miserable and unholy; and their parents fail to prevail upon them to yield. A sad case has just happened: a band of young maidens ended their existence in this world by drowning themselves in the Dragon River, because one of them was forced by her parents to be married. She was engaged in her childhood before she joined this sisterhood. When her parents had made all the necessary arrangements for her marriage, she reported the affair to the other members of her sisterhood, who at once agreed to die for her cause if she remained constant to her sworn vows to be single and virtuous. Should she violate the laws of the sisterhood and yield to her parents, her life was to be made most unpleasant by the other members and she was to be taunted as a worthless being. She consulted with them as to the best mode of escaping this marriage, and they all agreed to die with her, if she could plan to run away from her parents on the night of the marriage. As there were many friends to watch her movements, it was almost impossible for her to escape, so she attempted her life by swallowing a gold ring, but any serious consequence that might have resulted was prevented by the administration of a powerful emetic. She was finally forced and made over to the male side to her great grief. According to the usual custom, she was allowed to return to her parents. During all this time she was planing a way to escape to her sisters. By bribing the female servants she was taken one night to her sisters under the cover of darkness. The sisters at once joined with her in terminating their lives by jumping into the Dragon River with its swift currents, which rapidly carried them off. This kind of tragedy is not uncommon in this part of the land. The officials have from time to time tried to check

the formation of such sisterhoods, but all their efforts were in vain. Girls must have reasons of their own for establishing such societies. Married life must have been proved by many in that region to have been not altogether too sweet. However, such wholesale suicide must be prevented by law if the parents have no control over their daughters.

IV.

It is well-known that Chinese law recognizes seven grounds for the divorce of a wife, as follows: Childlessness; Wanton conduct; Neglect of husband's parents; Loquacity (*to yen*); Thievishness; Jealousy; Malignant disease. The requisites for a Chinese wife are by no means sure to be exacting. A man in the writer's employ, who was thinking of giving up his single life, on being questioned, as to what sort of a wife he perferred, compendiously replied "It is enough if she is neither bald nor idiotic" In a country where the avowed end of marriage in to raise up a posterity to burn incense at the ancestral graves, it is not strange that 'Childlessness' should rank first among the grounds for divorce. It would be an error, however, to infer that either this, or any other of the above mentioned, are the ordinary occasions of divorce, simply because they are designated in the imperial code of laws. It is always difficult to arrive at just conclusions in regard to facts of a high degree of complexity, especially in regard to the Chinese. But so far as we can perceive, the truth appears to be that divorce in China is by no means so common as might be expected by one reasoning from the law just quoted. Probably the most common cause is adultery, for the reason that this is the crime most fatal to the existence of the family. But it must be distinctly understood that in every case of divorce, there is a factor to be taken into account, which the law does not even consider. This is the family of the woman, and as we have seen, it is a factor of great importance, and by no means to be disregarded. It is very certain that the family of the woman will resist any divorce which they consider to be unjust or disgraceful, not merely on account of the loss of 'face,' but for another reason even more powerful. In China a woman cannot return to her parent's home after an unhappy marriage, as is so often done in western lands, *because there is no provision for her support.* The land is set apart for the maintenance of the parents, and after that has been provided for the remainder is divided among the brothers. No lot or portion falls to any sister, it is this which makes it imperative that every woman should be married, that she may have some visible means of support. After her parents are dead, her brothers, or more certainly her brothers' wives, would drive her from the premises, as an alien who had no business to depend upon their family, when she 'belongs' to another. Under this state of things, it is not very likely that a husband would be allowed to divorce his wife, except for a valid cause, unless there should be some opportunity for her to 'take a step,' that is to re-marry elsewhere. Next to adultery, the most common cause of Chinese divorce is thought to be what western laws euphemistically term incompatibility, by which is meant, in this case, such constant domestic brawls as to make life, even to a Chinese, not worth living. It is needless to remark that when things have reached this pitch, they must be very bad indeed. Every one of the above cited causes for divorce evidently afford room for the loosest construction of the facts, and if the law were left to its own execution, with no restraint from the wife's family, the grossest injustice might be constantly committed. As it is, whatever settlement is arrived at in any particular case, must be the result of a compromise, in which the friends of the weaker party take care to see that their rights are considered.

We have repeatedly referred to the imperative necessity that every Chinese youth should be married. To a foreigner there is a mixture of the ludicrous and the pathetic, in the attitude of the average parent in regard to a marriage of a son who has nearly reached the age of twenty, and is still single. It is a Chinese aphorism of ancient times, that when sons and daughters are once married, "the great business of life has been despatched." Chinese parents look upon the marriage of their sons, just as western parents look upon the matter of taking young boys out their early dresses and putting them into trousers. The serious part of life cannot be begun until this is done, and to delay it is ridiculous and irrational.

Chinese parents are never willing to run the risk of having the marriage of any of their children, especially the sons, postponed until after the death of their parents. They feel uncertain whether the children already married will be willing to make the proper provision for the event, or indeed that they will let it take place at all. Affairs of this sort involve the partition of the land, with a portion to each married son, and it is not in human nature to wish to multiply the sharers in a property which is too often at the best wholly inadequate. For this cause, every prudent parent wishes to see this "main business of life," put through while he is able to superintend the details.

The inexorable necessity for the marriage of sons is not suspended by the fact that the child is wholly unsuited for a real marriage, or indeed incapable of it. Cases constantly occur, in which a boy who is a hopeless and helpless cripple, is married to a girl, whose family only assent

to the arrangement, because of the advantageous terms which are offered. Children who are subject to epileptic or other forms of fits, those who are more or less insane, and even those who are wholly idiotic, all may have, and do have 'wives' provided only that the families of the boys are in good circumstances. The inevitable result of this violation of the laws of nature, is an infinity of suffering for the girls whose lives are thus wrecked, and the evolution of a great wealth of scandal. There is another feature of Chinese married life, to which little attention seems to have been paid by foreigners, but which is well worth investigation. It is the kidnapping of legally married wives. The method by which this may be accomplished, and the difficulty of tracking those who do it, may be illustrated by the following case, with the principal pals in which, the father and the father-in-law of the bride, the writer is acquainted, having been present at the wedding in December 1881. The bride herself, was, as so often, a mere child. On her frequent visits to her native village which local custom allows, the bride did not spend much of her time at her own home, where she was probably not made very welcome by her stepmother, but went instead to her grandmother's, who was old, half blind, and ill supplied with bedding. In a neighbouring yard lived a cousin of the girl, who was a 'salt inspector,' that is one whose duty it is to seize dealers in smuggled salt. His wife was the daughter of a widow, who was reported to be herself a dealer in smuggled salt, of course with the connivance of her son-in-law. This couple were said to have been married without the intervention of go-betweens, and hence the most flagitious conduct was to be expected from them. The girl got into the habit, whenever she visited her village, of going to the house of this cousin, and not to that of her father. The cousin was absent much of the time, on his business in connection with the suppression (or the sale) of smuggled salt. Upon one occasion, after a ten day's visit to her native village she returned to the home of her husband (also a mere child), where she staid five days, and then went again to her own village. A younger sister-in-law, sixteen years of age, went with her two thirds of the way, at which point the bride sent her escort back and proceeded along. Some days after this, the own sister of the bride met the father-in-law at a fair, and inquired why the bride did not return to her own village as agreed. Her absence from both homes was thus for the first time discovered. The steps taken to follow her are an excellent illustration of certain phases of Chinese life. It is almost impossible in China for any one to do anything so secretly that some other persons do not know of it, and in an affair so serious as the disappearance outright of a young bride, the chances of successful concealment would seem to be very slight.

The father-in-law of the girl went to the village where she had lived, and learned that upon the occasion of her home visits the child had been allowed to go where she pleased, and that once after coming in from her cousin's, she had been heard to remark that she herself was worth as much as five ounces of silver. It was also reported that the wife of the cousin had been observed waiting for the missing girl, on the night she was last seen at the time when she dismissed the sister-in-law who had accompanied her. This was all the clue that could be got.

The father-in-law now presented a petition to the district magistrate, reciting the facts and accusing the girl's father, and others. This was followed by counter accusations from the father, the cousin, and his mother-in-law. The official reply to the complaint was an order to the local constable to find the girl. The constable was a wholly incompetent person, and could not have found her if he had tried. A second petition to the magistrate was followed by the same reply. This signified that there was no hope from that official, who took no interest in the matter.

The next stage in the proceedings was to put the matter into the hands of friends, begging them to undertake what the principal could not do for himself. (This act is expressed in Chinese by the character *t'o*, which means, "to engage one to do," a word for which there is no equivalent in the English language, perhaps for the characteristic reason that those who made the English language had never learned "to engage one to do," but when they wanted anything done, did it themselves. To simplify the narrative, and to avoid circumlocutions, we shall use *t'o* as if it were an English word). The first person whom the father-in-law thought to *t'o* was a person named Ma, who lived in a village six miles away, but it was first necessary to *t'o* one of the father-in-law's townsmen to get at Ma, the two being distantly connected. This made what the Chinese call a "circuitous *t'o*." The man Ma passed on the *t'o* to another man, named Yü, each of them having been salt inspectors in the same district. The man Yü was to find another man named Wang, who was a person of much local importance in a village not far from the home of the father-in-law, for no two of the persons in this circuitous *t'o* lived in the same village. The man Yü passed on his *t'o* to another local bully in a village several miles distant. The man Ma had another *t'o* to see the head inspector of salt for the district, who is asked to make an official report to the magistrate, reciting the alleged facts against the salt

inspector, who is the girl's cousin. This was done, the cousin was summoned before the magistrate, who inquired if he had heard of the charge, but he had not! Was the charge true? Oh no, wholly false. If it should turn out to be true, would he assume the responsibility? Certainly he would. Upon this the inspector was dismissed, and the second stage of the proceedings closed with as little result as the first. After these repeated failures of justice, the poor father-in-law resolved to make one more trial, a desperate expedient, but the only one which was left. He seized the occasion of the passing of the district official through that village, to kneel in front of the sedan-chair and proclaim his grievance. The magistrate merely repeated what had been said in court, that he knew nothing about the matter; that it was not his business to find the cattle of those who might lose them, neither was it his function to recover daughters-in-law. He also expressed the opinion that the father-in-law was lacking in proof of his case, and was falsely accusing parties who were innocent, and then ordered his chair to proceed. The only remaining hope of tracing the missing person was to follow up chance clues. For example, a man living in a village near to the home of the father-in-law had a daughter visiting in the village in which lived the mother-in-law of the obnoxious cousin. This young girl, while on this visit, saw a cart drive to the door of this mother-in-law, which was directly opposite, and saw a girl who was crying put into the cart and driven away. A persistent effort to follow up this story resulted in nothing more than a declaration that it was only the "talk of children." A visit on the part of the father-in-law to the village to which the cart in question was supposed to have gone, resulted in the discovery of nothing. In such a case, no one will give any information whatever, no matter what he may know, for the reason that the possible effect may be to drag him as witness into a fearful lawsuit, which is only one step removed from being the principal victim oneself. This is so universal or deterrent in a quest of this sort as almost to bar all progress. Those who were interested in this particular case were led to recal another, which occurred many years before in a village immediately contiguous, where the wife of a man who was working for some one else was taken off (of course with her consent) while he was absent. In this instance, although the husband was able to ascertain to what village she had been taken, yet as it was a large one he could never get any farther trace of her, and she died there. The writer is personally acquainted with two families in which such occurrences have taken place, and with a third, the wife in which, when living with her first husband who divorced her, was to have been kidnapped, if the plan could have been carried out.

It is of course impossible to form any correct idea as to the extent to which the kidnapping of married women is carried in China, but there are a few little windows through which glimpses may be had of regions beyond our ordinary vision. Such glimpses may be frequently gained from accounts published in Chinese native newspapers, in which such accounts often form a staple topic. In the absence of any acquaintance with the wider interests of the empire, these piquant personalities seem to many Chinese very entertaining, as items of a similar sort do to certain readers in Western lands. Such gossip is collected at the yamens, where many of the cases reported have already reached the stage of a prosecution, and others are quietly adjusted by peace-talkers. Similar information may also be obtained from occasional memorials printed in the *Peking Gazette*. It not seldom happens that these kidnapping cases lead to murder, and perhaps to wholesale fighting, ending in many deaths, which renders it necessary for a Governor to report the facts and proceedings to Peking. From data of this sort one would infer that, as the proverb says, "the crow is everywhere equally black".

We have spoken of the sale of girls by their parents, and have now to refer to the more or less common cases of the sale of wives by their husbands. This is generally due to the press of poverty, and the writer is acquainted with a Chinese who, being deeply in debt, was thrown into prison from which he found deliverance hopeless. He accordingly sent word to his relatives to have his wife sold, which was done, and with the proceeds the man was able to buy his escape. The frequency of such sales may be said to bear a direct ratio to the price of grain.

There is another method of selling wives, with which the Chinese are acquainted, which can be adopted whenever the pressure of life at home becomes too hard to be borne. The husband and wife then start off on a begging expedition toward a region in which the crops have been good. In a bad year, there are thousands of such persons roaming about the country, picking up a scanty subsistence wherever they can. The man who wishes to sell his wife represents her as his sister, and declares that they are forced by hunger to part company. He reluctantly makes up his mind to sell her to some one who is in need of a wife, and who can get one more cheaply by this process than by any other. To this arrangement the woman tearfully assents, the money is paid to her "brother", and he departs, to be seen no more. After a few days or a few weeks in her new home, the newly married "sister" contrives to steal out in the evening with all of her own

clothes and as many more as she can collect, and rejoins her "brother", setting out with him for "fresh woods and pastures new." With that keen instinct for analogy which characterises the Chinese, they have invented for this proceeding the name of "falconing with a woman," likening it to the sport of a man who places his hawk on his wrist, and releases it when he sees game in sight, only that the bird may speedily return. It is a popular proverb, that "playing the falcon with a woman" implies a plot in which two persons are concerned.

An inquirer is told that in some districts this practice of "falconing" is "exceedingly common," for the supply of gullible persons who hope to buy a wife at a cheaper rate than usual never fails.

V.

It is a natural sequence to the Chinese doctrine of the necessity of having male children that, in case this becomes unlikely, a secondary wife, or concubine, should be taken, with that end in view. As a matter of fact, this practice is confined to a comparatively small number of families, mainly those in fairly good circumstances, for no others could afford the expense. The evils of this expedient are well recognised, and it is fortunate for Chinese society that resort is not had to it on a much greater scale than appears to be the case. The practical turn of the Chinese mind has suggested to them a much simpler method of arriving at the intended results, by a much less objectionable method. This is the adoption of children from collateral branches of the family, so as to keep the line of succession intact and prevent the extinction of any particular branch.

It not infrequently happens that the son in a family dies before he is married, and that it is desirable to adopt, not a son, but a grandson. But there is to the Chinese a kind of paradox in adopting a grandson, when the son has not been married. To remedy this defect after the boy died unmarried would, to the practical occidental, appear impossible, but it is not so to the sentimental Chinese. To meet this exigency, they have invented the practice of *marrying the dead*, which is certainly among the most singular of the many singular performances to be met with in China. In order, as is said, to keep the line of succession unbroken, it is thought desirable that each generation should have its proper representatives, whether they really were or were not links in the chain. It is only in families where there is some considerable property that this question is likely to arise. Where it does arise, and where a lad has died, for whom it is thought desirable to take a post-mortem wife, the family cast about to hear of some young girl who has also died recently. A proposition is then made by the usual intermediaries, for the union of these two corpses in the bonds of matrimony! It is probably only poor families to which such a proposition in regard to their daughter would be made; to no others would it be any object. If it is accepted, there is a combination of a wedding and a funeral, in the process of which the deceased "bride" will be taken by a large number of bearers to the cemetery of the other family, and laid beside her "husband"! The newly adopted grandson worships the corpse of his "mother", and the other ceremonies proceed in the usual way. The writer was personally acquainted with a Chinese girl who after her death was thus "married" to a dead boy in another village. Upon being questioned in regard to the matter, her father admitted that it was not an entirely rational procedure, but remarked that the girl's mother was in favour of accepting the offer. The real motive in this case was undoubtedly a desire to have a showy funeral, at the expense of another family, for a child who was totally blind and whose own parents were too poor at her death to do more than wrap her body in a mat.

The practice of marrying one dead person to another is very far from uncommon in China. Its ultimate root is found in the famous dictum of Mencius, that of the three lines of unfilial conduct the chief is to leave no posterity. This utterance is one upon which the whole domestic life of the Chinese seems to have rested for ages. It is for this reason that those Chinese who have not yet married are accounted as of no importance. When they die, if children they are "thrown out" either literally or figuratively, and are not allowed a place in the family grave-yards. These belong exclusively to those who are mated, and occasional bachelors must expect no welcome there. The same principle seems to be applicable to those who have died, and whose wives have remarried. It is for such cases that the strange plan of marrying a living woman to a dead husband has been invented. The motive on the part of the woman could be only that of saving herself from starvation, a fate which often hangs imminent over poor Chinese widows who do not remarry. The motive on the part of the family of the deceased husband is to make the ancestral graves complete. If the family of the deceased is not moderately well off, they would not go to the expense and trouble of bringing in a wife for a dead husband. But if she were well off, the widow would probably not have re-married. It thus appears that the marriage of a living woman to a dead man is likely to be confined to cases where, the family being poor, the widow re-married, but where the family circumstances having subsequently materially improved, it became an object to arrange as already explained to fill the threatened graveyard gap.

It is perhaps for this reason that cases of such marriage appear to be relatively rare, so rare indeed, that many even intelligent and educated Chinese have never heard of them at all, and perhaps stoutly deny their existence. Sufficient inquiry, however, may not improbably devolop here and there specific cases of conformity to this custom, so repellent to our thought, but natural and rational to the Chinese.

In cases where it has been decided to adopt a son, and where there are no suitable candidates within the family circle, a lad may be taken from a different family, sometimes related, sometimes connected, sometimes neither related nor connected, and sometimes he may even be a total stranger merely "picked up." The result of this latter practice especially is often very disappointing and painful for the couple who have gone to so much trouble to find an heir, and who too often discover that they have spent their strength in vain, and that filial piety is not a commodity to be had for the asking. But whatever its attendant evils, which are undoubtedly many and great, the Chinese plan of adoption is always incomparably preferable to that of bringing into the yard a "little wife". It is by no means singular that the Chinese have given, to the relations between the real wife and the supplementary one, the significant name of "sipping vinegar". We happen to have been personally acquainted with only four families in which a concubine had been introduced In two of them, the secondary wives had been bought because they were to be had at a cheap rate in a year of famine. One of these poor creatures came one day running into the yard of a Chinese family with whom the writer was living, screaming and dishevelled, as the result of "vinegar sipping". The man who had taken her openly reviled his mother in the most shameless way, upon her remonstrance at the act- In the second instance, a man past middle life thought by this means to make sure of a son, but was greatly disappointed in the result. He was in the habit of inviting elderly Chinese women of his acquaintance to go to his house, and "exhort" his wives to stop "sipping vinegar", a labour which was attended with very negative results. When he died, the last wife was driven out to return to her relatives, although for a country villager her husband was reputed to be a fairly rich man. In cases where the concubine has a son, in the event of her husband's death if affairs are properly managed she has a portion of land set apart for her like any other wife. A third case is reported even while these lines are committed to paper. In this instance a neighbour of the writer and a man in middle life had a third wife, about forty years of age, the preceeding wives having died, one of them leaving a daughter now twenty years of age. The father was absent from home much of the time, engaged in business in Peking. With Chinese thus situated, it often appears to be a particularly happy solution of a difficulty, to have two wives, the legal wife at home, and the "small one" at the place where the husband spends most of his time. When the man returned to his home, several months ago, he brought this secondary wife with him, an act very well adapted to promote "vinegar sipping." This additional wife was a mere child, much younger than the daughter of her husband. At the next New Year it was reported that the man would not allow his proper wife to go to the ancestral graves, but insisted upon taking his young concubine to do the sacrificing. Other injurious reports, true or false, were circulated in regard to his behaviour toward his proper wife, and his intentions in the future to abandon or to divorce her, and these soon reached the village of which she was a native. The result was a deputation of a considerable number of elderly men from that village to the one in which the husband lived. This deputation instituted proceedings by summoning the head of the husband's clan to meet them. But a large number of young men, from that same village, having heard of the affair, could not wait for the elders to adjust the matter by slow Chinese diplomacy, but came in a body to the house of the husband, and without any ceremony made an attack upon it, breaking down the barred door and throwing themselves with violence upon the defenceless husband. The attacking party had armed themselves with *awls*, but not, according to their own account, with knives. It was late at night when the onslaught was made, and it was impossible to distinguish friend from foe. The husband was at once overpowered, and was subsequently found to have seventeen awl-stabs on his chest, and two savage knife-cuts on his back, penetrating to the lungs. It was alleged by the attacking party that the latter wounds must have been made by some of the man's immediate neighbours who were personal enemies and who, hearing the outcry, rushed in only to find that their enemy was defenceless, and open to their attack (which could not be proved against them) a circumstance of which they took care to avail themselves. The attacking party having thus placed themselves in the wrong were obliged, upon being prosecuted at law, to get an influential company of intermediaries to help them out of the difficulty. This was at last accomplished according to the usual Chinese method—a great deal of head knocking and a great many feasts for the injured party. Notwithstanding such instructive object-lessons as these, with which all parts of China must to a greater or less extent abound,

many of those who think that they can afford to do so, continue to repeat the experiment, although the adage says: "If your wife is against it, do not take a concubine." If this advice were to be adopted, it is not improbable that the practice of concubinage in China would become practically extinct.

A traveller through China often notices in the villages along his route that in the early morning most of the men seem to be assembled by the roadside, each one squatting in front of his own door, all busily engaged in shovelling in their food with chopsticks (appropriately called "nimble-sons") chatting meantime during the brief intervals with the neighbour nearest. That the entire family should sit down to a table, eating together and waiting for one another, after the manner of the inhabitants of some countries of which we have heard, is an idea so foreign to the ordinary Chinese mind as to be almost incomprehensible. This Chinese (and oriental) habit is at once typical and suggestive. It marks a wholly different conception of the family, and of the position of woman therein, from that to which we are accustomed. It indicates the view that while man is *yang*, the male, ruling, and chief element in the universe, woman is *yin*, "dull, female, inferior." The conception of woman as man's companion is in China almost totally lacking, for woman is not the companion of man, and with society on its present terms she never can be. A new bride introduced into a family has visible relations with no one less than with her "husband." He would be ashamed to be seen talking with her, and in general they seem in that line to have very little to be ashamed of. In those unique instances in which the young couple have the good sense to get acquainted with each other, and present the appearance of actually exchanging ideas, this circumstance is the joke of the whole family circle, and an insoluble enigma to all its members. A Chinese bride has no rational prospect of happiness in her new home, though she may be well dressed, well fed, and perhaps not abused. She must expect chronic repression through the long years during which she is for a time in fact, and in theory always, a "child." Such rigorous discipline may be necessary to fit her for the duties of her position, when she shall have become herself a mother-in-law, and at the head of a company of daughters-in-law, but it is a hard necessity. That there are sometimes genuine attachments between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law it would be a mistake to deny, for in such rare cases human nature shows its power of rising superior to the conventional trammels in which it finds itself by iron customs bound.

To defend herself against the fearful odds which are often pitted against her, a Chinese wife has but two resources. One of them is her mother's family, which, as we have seen, has no real power, and is too often to be compared to the stern light of a ship, of no service for protection in advance, and only throwing a lurid glare on the course which has been passed over, but which can not be retraced. The other means of defence which a Chinese wife has at her command is herself. If she is gifted with a fluent tongue, especially if it is backed by some of that hard common sense which so many Chinese exhibit, it must be a very peculiar household in which she does not hold her own. Real ability will assert itself, and such light as a Chinese woman possesses will assuredly permeate every corner of the domestic bushel under which it is of necessity hidden. If a Chinese wife has a violent temper, if she is able at a moment's notice to raise a tornado about next to nothing, and to keep it for an indefined period blowing at the rate of a hundred miles an hour, the position of such a woman is almost certainly secure. The most termagant of mothers-in-law hesitates to attack a daughter-in-law who has no fear of men or of demons, and who is fully equal to any emergency. A Chinese woman in a fury is a spectacle by no means uncommon. But during the time of the most violent paroxysms of fury, Vesuvius itself is not more unmanageable by man. If a Chinese husband happens to be a person of a quiet habit, with no taste for tumults, he may possibly find himself yoked to a Xantippe who never for an instant relaxes the reins of her dominion. In such cases the prudent man will be glad to purchase "peace at any price," and whatever the theory may be, the woman rules. Such instances are by no means infrequent. This is witnessed as well by what one sees and hears in Chinese society as well as by the many sayings which refer to the "man-who-fears-what-is-inside," that is, the "hen-pecked man." Although it is an accepted adage that

"A genuine cat will slay a mouse,
"A genuine man will rule his house,"

yet there are numerous references to the punishment of "kneeling-by-the-bedside-holding-a-lamp-on-the-head," which is the penalty exacted by the regnant wife from her disobedient husband.

If a Chinese woman has the heaven-bestowed gift of being obstreperous to such a decree that, as the sayings go, "people do not know east from west"; that "men are worn out and horses exhausted"; that "the mountains tremble and the earth shakes", this is unquestionably her surest life-preserver. It is analogous to the South American toucan, which frightens away enemies by its mere exhibition, they not caring to wait for further and detailed proofs of its capacities of execution. But if such an endowment has been denied her,

her next best resource is to pursue a course exactly the opposite, in all circumstances and under all provocations *holding her tongue*. To most Chinese women, this seems to be a feat as difficult as aërial navigation, but now and then an isolated case shows that the difficult is not always the impossible.

We must regard the position of women, and especially of wives, in China as the ultimate outcome and most characteristic fruitage of the Confucian system. In our view it has been a bitter fruit, and in recapitulating we wish to lay especial emphasis upon the Seven Deadly Sins of Confucianism in its relation to women.

I.—It provides them with no education. Their minds are left in a state of nature, until millions of them are led to suppose that they have no minds at all, an opinion which their husbands often do much to confirm, and upon which they habitually act.

II.—The sale of wives and daughters. This comes about so naturally, and it might almost be said so inevitably, when certain conditions prevail, that it is taken by the Chinese as a matter of course. Except in years of famine it appears in some parts of the empire to be rare, but in other parts it is the constant and the normal state of things for daughters to be as really sold as are horses and cattle.

III.—Too early and too universal marriages. A considerable part of the unhappiness caused by Chinese marriages may fairly be charged to the immaturity of the victims. To treat children as if they were adults, while at the same time treating them as children who require the same watch and ward as other children, does not appear to be a rational procedure, nor can it be claimed that it is justified by its results. That a new pair constitute a distict entity, to be dealt with independently, is a proposition which Confucianism treats with scorn, if indeed it ever entertains such a conception at all. The compulsory marriage of all girls forces all Chinese society into cast-iron grooves, and leaves no room for exceptional individual development. It throws suspicion around every isolated struggle against this galling bondage, and makes the unmarried woman seem a personified violation of the decrees of Heaven and of the laws of man.

IV.—Infanticide of female infants. This is a direct, if not a legitimate result of the tenet that male children are absolutely indispensable, applied in a social system where dire poverty is the rule, and where an additional mouth frequently means impending starvation. In a chapter in her "Pagoda Shadows" on "The extent of a Great Crime" Miss Fielde combines a great variety of testimony taken from several different provinces, in the following paragraph. "I find that a hundred and sixty Chinese women, all over fifty years of age, had borne six hundred and thirty-one sons, and five hundred and thirty-eight daughters. Of the sons, three hundred and sixty-six, or nearly sixty per cent, had lived more than ten years; while of the daughters only two hundred and five, or thirty-eight per cent, had lived ten years. The hundred and sixty women, according to their own statements, had destroyed a hundred and fifty eight of their daughters; but none had ever destroyed a boy. As only four women had reared more than three girls, the probability is that the number of infanticides confessed to is considerably below the truth. I have occasionally been told by a woman that she had forgotten just how many girls she had had, more than she wanted. The greatest number of infanticides owned to by any one woman is eleven."

Infanticide will never cease in China, until the notion that the dead are dependent for their happiness upon sacrifices offered to them by the living shall have been totally overthrown.

V.—Secondary wives. Concubinage is the natural result of the Confucian theory of ancestral worship. The misery which it has caused and still causes in China is beyond comprehension. Nothing can uproot it but a decay of faith in the assumption underlying all forms of worship of the dead.

VI.—Suicides of wives and daughters. The preceding causes, operating singly and in combination, are wholly sufficient to account for the number of suicides among Chinese women. The wonder rather is that there are not more. But whoever undertakes to collect facts on this subject for any given district will not improbably be greatly surprised at the extraordinary prevalence of this practice. It is even adopted by children, and for causes relatively trifling. At times it appears to spread, like the small pox, and the thirst for suicide becomes virtually an epidemic. According to the native newspapers, there are parts of China in which young girls band themselves into a secret league to commit suicide within a certain time after they have been betrothed or married. The wretchedness of the lives to which they are condemned is thoroughly appreciated in advance, and fate is thus effectually checkmated. It would be wrong to overstate the evils suffered by woman in China, evils which have indeed many alleviations, and which are not to be compared to those of her sisters in India or in Turkey. But after all abatements have been made it remains true that the death-roll of suicides is the most convincing proof of the woes endured by Chinese women.

VII.—Overpopulation. The whole Chinese race, is and always has been given up with a single devotion to the task of raising up a posterity, to do for the fathers what

the fathers have done for the grandfathers. In this particular line, they have realised Wesley's conception of the ideal church in its line, where as he remarked the members are 'All at it, and always at it.' War, famine, pestilence sweep off scores of millions of the population, but a few decades of peace seem to repair the ravages of the past, which are lost to sight, like battle-fields covered with wide areas of waving grain. However much we may admire the recuperative power of the Chinese people as a whole, and individually, it is impossible not to feel righteous indignation toward a system which violates those beneficent laws of nature, which would mercifully put an end to many branches of families when such branches are unfitted to survive. It is impossible to contemplate with equanimity the deliberate, persistent, and uniform propagation of poverty, vice, disease and crime, which ought rather to be surrounded with every restriction to prevent its multiplication, and to see this propagation of evil and misery done, too, with an air of virtue, as if this were of itself a kind of religion, often indeed the only form of religion in which the Chinese take any vital interest.

It is this system which loads down the rising generation with the responsibility for feeding and clothing tens of thousands of human beings who ought never to have been born, and whose existence can never be other than a burden to themselves, a period of incessant struggle without respite and without hope.

To the intelligent foreigner, the most prominent fact in China is the poverty of its people. There are too many villages to the square mile, too many families to the village, too many 'mouths' to the family. Wherever one goes, it is the same weary tale with interminable reiteration. Poverty, poverty, poverty, always and evermore poverty. The empire is broad, its unoccupied regions are extensive, and its undeveloped resources undoubtedly vast. But in what way can these resources be so developed as to benefit the great mass of the Chinese people? By none, with which we are acquainted, or of which we can conceive, without a radical disturbance of the existing conditions. The seething mass of overpopulation, must be drawn off to the regions where it is needed, and then only will there be room for the relief of those who remain. It is impossible to do anything for people who are wedged together after the manner of matches in a box. Imagine a surgeon making the attempt to set the broken leg of a man in an omnibus in motion, which at the time contained twenty other people, most of whom also had broken legs which likewise require setting! The first thing to do would be to get them all unloaded, and to put them where they could be properly treated, with room for the treatment, and space for breathing. It is, we repeat, not easy to perceive how even the most advanced political economy can do anything of permanent benefit for the great mass of the Chinese without a redistribution of the surplus population. But at this point practical Confucianism intervenes, and having indeed the begetting of this swarm of human beings, it declares that they must not abandon the graves of their ancestors, who require their sacrifices, but must in the same spot continue to propagate a number their posterity to continue the interminable process.

The world is still large, and it has, and for ages will doubtless continue to have, ample room for all the additional millions which its existing millions can produce. The world was never so much in need of the Chinese as to-day, and never, on the other hand, were the Chinese more in need of the world. But if China is to hold its own, much more if it is to advance as other nations have advanced, and do advance, it must be done under the head of new forces. Confucianism has been a mighty power to build up, and to conserve. But Confucianism with its great merits has committed many 'Deadly Sins,' and of those sins it must ultimately suffer the penalty. Confucianism as a developing force is a force which is spent. Sooner or later it must give way to something stronger, wiser, and better.